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THE LEAGUE'S BUSINESS

Western Conference on Government.—The League is one of thirteen organizations taking part in the Western Conference on Government, held March 28-30 at the University of California, Berkeley. Among the topics being discussed are reorganization of local government, municipal finance, national recovery and public welfare, housing and the "New Deal," debts and tax collections, and municipal, state, and federal inter-relationships. Reports on the meetings are not available as we go to press but an account of the conference will be carried in next month's issue of the REVIEW.

* * *

Radio Series Still Popular.—The current series of "You and Your Government" broadcasts is proving as popular with our radio audience as former series. The program for April and May is outlined below. These broadcasts may be heard each Tuesday evening at 7:15 eastern standard time.

April 10—"State and Local Government in the Control of the Liquor Traffic." Albert L. Scott, Engineer, Co-author Rockefeller Report, Toward Liquor Control; Yandell Henderson, Professor of Applied Physiology, Yale University; Professor Luther Gulick, Columbia University, Director, Institute of Public Administration.

April 17—"From the Heart of the Depression." Mayor Frank Couzens, Detroit; Arthur J. Lacy, Attorney; Professor Arthur W. Bromage, University of Michigan.

April 24—"Local Government and the New Deal." Dr. William T. Foster, Consumers Advisory Board; Harold D. Smith, President, American Municipal Association.

May 1—"Suburban Troubles." Walter R. Darby, State Auditor, New Jersey; E. F. Dunstan, Chairman, Municipal Securities Committee, Investment Bankers Association of America; Arnold Frye, Attorney, Hawkins, Delafield and Longfellow.

May 8—"Chicago Over the Hump." John O. Rees, Secretary, Committee on Public Expenditures; Robert B. Upham, City Comptroller.

May 15—"Schools for Municipal Officials." Mayor J. Boyd Thacher, Albany, N. Y.; Albert H. Hall, Director, Bureau of Training, New York Conference of Mayors; Morton L. Wallerstein, Director, Virginia League of Municipalities.

May 22—"News from the South." Mayor J. Fulmer Bright, Richmond, Va.; Hon. William B. Harrison, Former Mayor of Louisville, Ky.

May 29—"The National Administration and Local Reorganization." George F. Milton, President and Editor, *The Chattanooga News*; Arnold Bennett Hall, Director, Institute for Government Research, Brookings Institution.

* * *

New York State Conference.—"Reorganization of Town and County Government" was the general topic of a conference held March 29, in New York City, for representatives of citizens' councils in New York State and others interested. This was the first of a series of conferences planned under the auspices of the National Municipal League to give working information to council delegates and plans through which activities of local councils in New York State can be coordinated in a state-wide program.

Dr. Carl McCombs of the Institute of Public Administration, Carl H. Pforzheimer of the Westchester County Commission, and George H. Hallett, Jr., of the New York Citizens Union, were among the speakers at the afternoon conference. Senator Seabury C. Mastick spoke at the dinner in the evening on the work of the State Commission on Local Government.

HOWARD P. JONES, *Secretary*

Editorial
Comment

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April

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Municipal Recovery on the Horizon

THE Hopi Indians, who live in a few isolated towns perched on three almost inaccessible mesas in north-eastern Arizona, are among the most civilized of the North American tribes. They are an agricultural people, they live in houses (one might almost say apartments) built of slabs of rock, and they have a deep tradition of living at peace with their neighbors.

They have, of course, no municipal services (except such as are supplied them by a paternalistic national government) but then, they have no property taxes to pay. Minus taxes, unless offerings to the gods of wind and rain, of sunshine and storm, of famine and plenty might be termed taxes, and disregarding the federal government's part, they live much as would the rest of America were its people paying no taxes.

They have no paved streets, they have no sewers, they have no libraries, they have no schools, they have no public health service. Indeed, one hundred of them had the measles last year and forty are reported to have died as a direct result of the "cure" that they apply to all diseases alike. They have no running water in their homes—the patient women frequently carry water for miles from the nearest spring.

It is a long step from an existence of this kind to the complexity of modern

urban life. The length of the step is apparent. It is a whole and complete rebuttal to those who would say to a community which cannot pay for the services it requires—close up and send your people back to the farms. In a democracy there is no going back. The only forces which can order an about-face are those of death and destruction. No such forces are apparent in the America of today.

On the contrary, hope and faith shine from one end of this country to the other. In a few cities where it has been necessary to prevent default on either bonds or services, citizens have actually been willing to pay increased taxes this year. A significant straw in the wind comes this week from Dallas, Texas, where tax collections to April 1 have actually exceeded expectations. Perhaps even more significant is the decision of the city council in another Texas municipality to increase the appropriation for libraries in the current budget. Even in Alabama, where schools have been kept open by tremendous local efforts plus help from Washington through the CWA, a spirit of confidence is so evident as to be striking.

The near future should see the beginning of the restoration of municipal services that have been eliminated or seriously impaired. The doors of

libraries now closed should reopen, boarded up schools again resound with the hum of activity and the voices of children—the lost ground regained.

As in most human activity, however, a note of warning needs must accompany a note of cheer. Of vital importance in municipal recovery is to steer away from old methods and archaic forms. Let the process of elimination of waste forced by the depression go on. Much of the economy of the depression

was immediate and hasty economy. In city after city it should be possible to restore curtailed services without an increase in the tax rate through long range economy programs which involve fundamental improvement in government organization and methods.

Municipal recovery is on its way. May the period of convalescence be one of intelligent appraisal and formulation of sound program.

H. P. J.

Charles P. Taft on Local Government

THIS Cincinnati experiment has demonstrated the place of faith in politics as well as in other walks of life. There is one characteristic of Lincoln which is most impressive. It was his deepest conviction, which endured through the darkest periods of the Civil War, that the right ultimately would prevail. There is in this movement in Cincinnati the type of religious conviction which is not fanatical; which is not even ecstatic; which is hard-headed, and yet idealistic; a conviction, a faith that local good government is a possibility. When we attacked the old administration, we were said to be "knocking" our town. When we said that we expected to put in an economical, efficient, honest government, many were the business men who said it could not be done. And, with that feeling, they hedged. They refused to come out. In some cases they contributed to both sides.

They never committed themselves in such a way that they could not withdraw if the public should change its mind.

But the faith of the few men who started this movement has been amply justified. The giant may loom large; he may seem overwhelming. The inertia of people is even more discouraging. And yet this group of Davids, for all their weakness, were able to overcome Goliath of the Machine, and to establish in Cincinnati and in Hamilton County good government conducted by honest men, with most of the same tools, most of the same employees and the same electorate with which the job had been done so badly by their predecessors. They proved that good government in American cities of substantial size is a possibility. — From *City Management, The Cincinnati Experiment*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1933.



HEADLINES

In the fight to install the city manager system Tacoma, Washington, springs a brand new one. Instead of permitting the issue to go direct to the voters the political powers maneuvered a special plebiscite on the question, "Do you favor a special election to consider the city manager plan?" Then they loudly explained that to hold such a special election would cost the taxpayers \$10,000. Strange to say, the proposal lost! Twelve thousand citizens were against spending that money and 8,000 favored it. The matter will come up again next year.

* * *

A study of the work of 296 justices in Michigan counties reveals that only twenty-one ever did any judicial business. *Judicial* business, that is. There is no record of their overlooking their political responsibilities.

* * *

Thirty-two townships in St. Louis County, Minnesota, are facing dissolution under a state law giving county boards authority to dissolve towns having a tax delinquency in excess of 70 per cent.

* * *

As one by-product of the better housing agitation, there are now 209 federal savings and loan associations. Florida, Arkansas, Indiana, and Illinois lead. The federal government agrees to invest up to \$100,000 in preferred stock in the associations it sanctions, and offers to finance 1,000 of them on this basis.

* * *

Ohio appropriates \$3,000,000 to finance old age pensions for the last six months of 1934. Having spent the money, the mere detail of raising it is all that remains. The legislature fearlessly attacks this problem by deferring consideration of special tax plans until after the date of adjournment.

* * *

Radio makes more strides forward as an arm of the public service. Chattanooga has a new police radio that prevents unauthorized persons from listening in. Police sanction is necessary to install it. Bayonne, New Jersey, develops a police radio system that enables occupants of police cars to talk directly to each other en route, instead of having to communicate by telephone through headquarters. The Federal Radio Commission now has licensed ninety-two cities, two counties and four states for police broadcasting systems. Eighteen cities, two counties and one state have applied for construction permits for proposed stations.

* * *

Des Moines reports inspiring success with its public forums. They drew a combined audience of 90,000 in one year. The forum meetings were of three types: neighborhood gatherings to discuss local problems, central gatherings for the serial discussion of public questions, and city-wide mass meetings that feature out-of-town speakers.

Vermont State Chamber of Commerce sponsors a state-wide competition on local town reports. For contest purposes the towns are divided into six population classes ranging from minus 1,000 to 5,000 plus. Competitive points include budget set-up, presentation of balance sheet and graphic display.

* * *

The new County Board of Supervisors of Henrico County, Virginia, wins an important supreme court ruling which authorizes the board to take over the county government forthwith. The board had been elected under Virginia's new county optional law. The validity of the law was questioned, but the court now rules that the legislature was within its rights in passing it. This removes one of Virginia's chief obstacles to installing the county manager system.

* * *

A "Survey of Housing Surveys" is under consideration by the National Association of Housing Officials.

* * *

New York legislature at last reaches a forthright decision about the urgent need for immediate county organization. The statesmen agree to give the matter immediate consideration—immediately next year, they mean, when a new legislature can take the responsibility. The Mastick Tax Revision Committee is instructed to report back not later than February 15, 1935, with recommendations for county and township reorganization. The matter has already been studied by numberless commissions for endless years, and has been the subject of constant newspaper discussion all winter. However, one year more will give the legislature a chance to find out what the rest of us know already.

* * *

From the Scranton, Pennsylvania, *Scrantonian*, which is much excited because a "well-dressed, talented and suave" stranger publicly advocated the city manager plan in its home town recently:

"It is apparent that these obviously well paid city manager agents are being backed by a syndicate that is prepared to furnish managers when desired. If laws could be enacted forcing inland municipalities to employ expert managers it would create a condition that would make the city manager schools as profitable as the Klu Klux Klan membership plan that it is alleged got the organization so much easy money about the country a few years ago."

Someone was sure to expose this racket sooner or later. Now, if they would only expose the method by which these agents get on the payroll! A lot of us could use a good suit of clothes.

* * *

Pennsylvania discovers that it is supporting 5,637 different units of local government, and promptly joins its voice to the nation-wide cry for reorganization.

* * *

Evanston, Ill., has been named winner of the second national traffic safety contest sponsored in 1933 by the National Safety Council. More than 300 American cities competed in this coast-to-coast highway safety competition.

* * *

A study made by the General Welfare Tax League shows that a sales tax which includes food, bears sixty times as heavily upon the \$1,000 a year laborer as upon the man receiving a million-dollar-a-year income. If food is exempted, the tax is thirty-four times heavier upon the former than upon the latter, according to Harold S. Buttenheim in *New Jersey Municipalities*.

E. M. B.

Housing Under The New Deal

Citizen leadership
needed if housing is
to secure the atten-
tion it deserves

JOHN H. MILLAR

Federal Emergency Relief Administration

PROGRESS in housing under the "New Deal" has been largely of a preliminary sort to date. There has been practically no building, though there may be some this year. We are still a long way from arriving at any clear, generally accepted conclusions as to what and where to build. Even the term "housing" is a hazy one to most of us. It may mean a certain type of large apartment project or it may mean all kinds of residential building, depending upon how we like to look at it. In this discussion it is used in the latter sense.

Housing is our way of living. Progress in housing will measure our real progress to a more abundant life. If masses of the people continue to live in the unwholesome squalor that now exists, much of the "New Deal" talk will be only pious wishing.

The situation is this. We have made a lot more progress in supplying food, clothing, and transportation at low prices to the common people than we have in supplying them housing. Shelter commonly costs both rich and poor more than it should, with the burden upon the poor especially heavy. The shelter they get is often so bad that it is a positive menace to the community. It breeds disease and crime, and so adds to social costs and increases taxpayers' burdens, to say nothing of the unhappiness and misery that result.

All the milling around of the past months has been part of the painful process of formation of public opinion on a subject that heretofore has been generally regarded as one for individual rather than social action.

It is because so many of us now realize for the first time that the problem of housing is infinitely more complicated than building four walls and a roof for each family, that we are in all this fog about it now. Housing can't be properly conceived and built without knowledge about population trends, which we lack in large part. To do the job rightly, we need much more advanced city planning than we have had to date. We really need some sound land policies—but we don't have them.

Lacking such essentials as these about the best we can do is to pick out here and there some locations and say, "Well, if we did have more facts, and if we did have city plans worthy of the name, the chances are that this spot would be one where housing would be built. Therefore, let us start." And when we get to this point, we discover an entire lack of agreement as to what kind of housing should be built. We realize that there is as yet no crystallized public opinion to support any housing program, be it good or bad.

Housing activities are scattered all over the federal lot. PWA's housing division is generally regarded as the

center. The failure of this agency to accomplish more is in part due to the fundamental difficulties already mentioned.

FEDERAL HOUSING EFFORTS

After some months of trying to promote limited dividend housing corporations, the housing division of PWA decided to go into business for itself. Accordingly, there was organized a Delaware corporation, named Public Works Emergency Housing Corporation, to build housing on its own account. One hundred million dollars was ear-marked for this corporation.

When Secretary Ickes sought to get some vouchers O.K.'ed to buy some operations in Cleveland, preparatory to beginning operations there, Comptroller-General McCarl held them up, declaring the housing corporation unconstitutional. There the matter stood for weeks. Recently Attorney General Cummings has handed down an opinion which favors Mr. Ickes. It is quite likely that by the time this is printed the corporation may be operating. Evidently Mr. Ickes believes that it will go ahead, for in February he hired a general manager, Colonel H. B. Hackett of Chicago, the man who had charge of the actual construction on numerous large buildings in Chicago—Stevens Hotel, Palmer House, Daily News Building, Palmolive Building, Board of Trade.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS ONLY

It is realized that, even if operations can be launched on all fronts, the \$100,000,000 available will do no more than build demonstration projects in a number of key cities. New York is slated for \$25,000,000. Cleveland, where public opinion on housing is more advanced than in most places, will do well. Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, and Atlanta have been specifically mentioned as be-

ing on the list. There are others. The situation is sufficiently in a formative state, as yet, to leave the way open for any city to ask for federal housing. Most of them have done it.

A number of states have recently enacted legislation authorizing the setting up of housing authorities, a new type of governmental agency, more or less on the order of the Port of New York Authority. These agencies would have power to go into the housing business and presumably would be utilized by the federal corporation to operate its properties once they are built.

Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and Maryland were the first states to provide for housing authorities. (These are quite different agencies from the state housing boards set up in thirteen states to regulate limited dividend housing corporations, mainly non-existent.)

PWA WORKING ON SLUM AREAS

While PWA housing division concentrates attention mainly on building housing in slum areas of big cities, two other agencies are doing interesting things in the subsistence homesteads field. One is the subsistence homesteads division of the Department of the Interior set up as a permanent and not an emergency agency, with a \$25,000,000 revolving fund. Starting with projects in Reedsville, W. Va., and Dayton, Ohio, this division now has given its approval to a score or more of projects, scattered around the country. Some houses have been finished. Indications are that there will be an alert demand for one-family houses, of modern if modest type, which can be bought for twenty-five to thirty dollars a month. When a Youngstown sales office opened for business, for example, the rush of potential buyers almost overwhelmed the force.

Tennessee Valley Authority, too, is

actively planning and building housing of similar type. There is close co-operation between the subsistence homesteads division and TVA. Tupelo, Miss., first city to contract to buy power from Mr. Lilienthal of TVA, was rewarded by being picked as the site for a subsistence homesteads project.

HOME LOAN BOARD ACTIVE

Meanwhile, the Federal Home Loan Board is taking steps that may have considerable significance. It is lending aid to agencies that provide mortgage money. One phase of this work is the setting up of federal savings and loan associations in localities where local mortgage lending facilities are needed. A hundred million dollars was provided for subsidizing such associations. With this fund not more than \$100,000 preferred stock can be bought in a new association that passes inspection. Thus, there is enough money to supply this aid to one thousand such organizations. As this is written, about a third of this number have been chartered or are in process of organization. These soundly conceived financing agencies are deserving of more attention than they have had to date. They are one of the few instances of setting up brand new financing agencies that are local and coöperative rather than national and paternalistic.

Indications are that large sums will be made available from the Federal Home Loan Board, through local lending agencies, for financing repair and modernization work this spring. This type of activity, too, deserves more attention than it has been getting. So far as making jobs is concerned, repair work will accomplish more for the money spent than will new construction, and will do it more quickly. The relation between repairs and building of new housing is much the same as the relation be-

tween civil works projects and the larger public works projects. The one is admirably adapted to employ men while the other is getting under way. It is to be regretted that rehabilitation of housing has not been aggressively pushed long before now. Had such been done, there would be less disappointment over the delays in new housing.

It will be necessary, before we really get very far in housing, to have more local leadership applied to the knotty problems involved. By its very nature housing is essentially a local problem. What the federal authorities are trying to do will amount to but little, unless local activity develops.

HOUSING UP TO THE LOCALITIES

More than any other emergency agency, CWA has thrown responsibility on localities. The results, in so far as they concern housing, are highly interesting and significant. In scores of places CWA workers dug up needed facts about local real estate and its use or misuse. And organized facts about present conditions are the raw material out of which intelligent plans are made, whether for housing or cities or regions.

In a few cities, as CWA went into the great decline that preceded its ending in name, and partial ending in fact, on April 1, belated projects were started to use CWA man power to demolish insanitary and useless structures—the actual beginning of slum clearance, meager though it has been to date.

CWA chieftains regret that they were not quicker to realize what a satisfactory project demolition can be. Instead of requiring purchase of materials, it produces them. The salvaged materials can be used to pay for trucks, liability insurance, superintendence by trained house wreckers, and other incidentals. This makes possible using 100 per cent

of the government money for wages to labor.

With demolition having these possibilities, it appears likely that, as CWA evolves into a more modest program of local made work, demolition will find a permanent place.

The logic of events indicates that organized rehabilitation will follow. In the first place, the coming on the market of salvaged materials is itself a stimulant of repair work. With some of the materials needed for such repairs available at bargain prices, more people are going to undertake jobs.

A further interesting possibility is the use of relief labor to repair privately owned buildings where owners will agree to make payment in space which the same relief agencies will assign to needy families. This plan makes possible spending for wages money that would otherwise go for rent. It is too early to have any idea of the extent to which this may develop. Certain city officials see in the repair of buildings acquired by tax-forfeiture a chance to recoup tax losses. By using relief labor to do the work, and subsequently renting, in large part to the relief agencies, city authorities can turn properties unwillingly acquired into revenue producers.

CITIZENS' COUNCILS CAN HELP

A development in Chicago, prompted in part by the fact that CWA brought slum clearance down out of the clouds by simply saying, "Here are men to do it," is of particular interest to members of the National Municipal League, in-

asmuch as the action taken was patterned after the Citizens' Councils for Constructive Economy which the league has promoted.

In Chicago were many organizations all more or less interested in housing, each after its own fashion, just as there are in most cities many organizations each more or less interested in good government after its own fashion. To coordinate efforts, and get all parties working together, a Metropolitan Housing Council was organized. Indications are that it will be effective, for the same reasons that citizens' councils are.

Opportunity exists in cities where there are no central housing agencies for citizens' councils to serve as housing centers, or at least to take responsibility for seeing that such are set up. The basic idea of the central council applies equally well in either housing or constructive economy.

Citizen leadership is needed in housing. After all, the citizens are the ones that live in it. In proportion as the people get actively interested, there will really be housing of the right sort.

(Editor's Note: Within the time this was written and printed, Mr. Millar joined the staff of the Work Division of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration as assistant on special projects. He is now concerned with housing activities of that organization. Relief Administrator Harry L. Hopkins announced on March 23 that in the new work relief program which starts April 1 about 15 per cent of the man power is scheduled for use in housing, with emphasis first on demolition and repairs in lieu of rent, much as Mr. Millar outlines above. "This housing program is subject to extension," the Hopkins statement added.)

The Blue Grass State Reorganizes

**Bills just signed mark
real advances in spite
of some obvious weak-
nesses**

J. W. MANNING

University of Kentucky

FOR many years the state of Kentucky has resisted every effort to reorganize her antiquated administrative structure. Only the clamour for the reduction of the costs of state government has produced something definite in this regard.

As a result the 1934 regular session of the general assembly passed two important measures. One consolidates the more than one hundred agencies of the state into sixteen administrative departments and seven independent agencies, reorganizing the entire administration so that the governor may be held responsible for the work of this arm of the government. The other, the Budget and Financial Administrative Act, provides for "an adequate, unified, and inter-related system of financial and business administration for the state government, embracing budgeting, accounting, pre-auditing, treasury administration, post-auditing, and fiscal reporting." Both bills have been signed by the Governor, to take effect July 1, 1934.

The 1932 session of the state legislature appropriated \$150,000 for an audit of the state's books, but the governor made no move to employ auditors until mid-summer 1933. At that time he appointed a self-styled advisory council to study the organization of state government and report its recommendations to the 1934 general assembly.

Under this council's recommendations, Griffenhagen and Associates were em-

ployed to make an audit of the affairs of the state. The entire audit has not been completed and thus no information is available as to the cost of this undertaking. Suffice it to say, Griffenhagen reported on the audit of the state's general fund early in February, and along with this audit report drew a bill for the governor's advisory council, looking toward the reorganization of the state's administrative structure. This bill was presented to the general assembly then in session, but the measure which finally passed the legislature and which will go into effect on July 1 is in no sense of the word the recommendation of Griffenhagen and Associates. However, the Reorganization Act contains some of the suggestions made by these experts.

In brief the act sets up sixteen administrative departments and recognizes seven independent agencies. Eleven of the departments are under the direct control of the governor. In addition there are five departments headed by as many constitutional elective officers. The act also recognizes seven independent administrative agencies outside the reorganized structure.

An interesting feature of the act is the fact that it provides for an executive cabinet consisting of the governor, the secretary of state, the auditor, the attorney general, the chairman of the state highway commission, the superintendent of public instruction, the com-

missioner of agriculture, labor and statistics, the treasurer, the chairman of the state tax commission, the chairman of the department of public welfare, the commissioner of insurance, the commissioner of banking and insurance, and Adjutant General. This cabinet is to meet once a month with the governor and advise with him on problems of state. The governor will be the chairman of the executive cabinet.

GOVERNOR CONTROLS CABINET

Seven of the cabinet are elective officers and six are appointive. In other words the governor is able to control six members, since they are appointed by him, the vote of whom together with his own vote will give the governor control of the general administrative policies of the state. This is certainly as it should be, since it meets the important principle of executive responsibility in administration. It is interesting to observe that the lieutenant-governor is not included in the executive cabinet; however, he was included in the original bill. And he is the only elective officer, except the railroad commissioners, who is not named in the cabinet.

Among the appointive department heads, four were not included in the cabinet—the commissioner of health, the adjutant general, the state inspector and examiner who is designated as the executive officer of the department of finance and budgetary control, and the chief inspector of mines who is named as the head of the department of mines and minerals.

Under the new arrangement, the department of education is an interesting agency. The department is to consist of the state board of education and the superintendent of public instruction, and is to exercise all administrative functions of the state in relation to the management and control of the public common schools, of vocational education

and rehabilitation, and of the state institutions of higher education for negroes. The university, the teacher's colleges, the school of the deaf, the school of the blind, with their governing boards, and the state textbook commission, as heretofore constituted, are deemed to be included within the department of education and to constitute parts thereof, but they are to continue to exercise all the functions conferred upon them by law in relation to their respective institutions. So far as the control of the department is concerned, we have an agency consisting of an elective officer not responsible to the governor and a board whose members serve for overlapping terms. If there were some possible method of eliminating an elective superintendent and substituting an appointive commissioner of education, this would probably be an ideal arrangement.

TWO EX-OFFICIO BOARDS

Among the departments presumably under the control of the governor there are two—finance and budgetary control and public property—which are headed by ex-officio boards. Under the new setup the department of finance and budgetary control will consist of the governor, the chairman of the state tax commission, the auditor, the state inspector and examiner, and the secretary of the executive cabinet. The governor is ex-officio chairman of the department, the secretary of the governor's executive cabinet is the secretary, and the inspector and examiner is the administrative officer of the department—a most peculiar and involved arrangement. As a matter of fact it is nothing more than a budget bureau and as such it should not be an unfortunate arrangement.

The department of public property consists of the governor, who is the chairman of the department, the auditor, the treasurer, the secretary of state, the attorney general, a member of the state

highway commission, a member of the department of public welfare, the superintendent of parks, and the commissioner of purchases when designated and appointed by the governor. This department is simply a consolidation of the sinking fund commission, the printing commission, the Kentucky state park commission, the purchasing commission, and the custodian of buildings. The secretary of the executive cabinet and the department of finance and budgetary control is named as the secretary of the department of public property.

Out of the eleven departments directly under the control of the governor, only five are headed by single officers appointed by the governor, namely the department of mines and minerals, the military department, the department of health, the department of insurance, and the department of banking and securities. This demonstrated the extent to which it was apparently necessary to compromise recognized principles of administration with an existing situation.

THE BUDGET AND FINANCIAL ACT

The Budget and Financial Administrative Act recognizes the creation of a department of finance and budgetary control and provides additional duties for the state inspector and examiner, making him the state budget officer. Under the law all expenditures of the state must be authorized by the annual or biennial appropriation bill to be prepared by the governor, the budget officer, and the board of finance. Budget units are to be provided with special forms prepared by the budget officer.

The outstanding provisions of the new act are the following:

(1) The governor is to examine the budget report in process and the state budget officer is to provide him with every practical facility for familiariz-

ing himself with its contents. He is to attend all budget hearings.

(2) The budget report must be transmitted to the house not later than the third Monday after the convening of general assembly in regular session.

(3) Capital outlay in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the department of finance.

(4) Capital outlays under \$10,000 except for the state highway department must be approved by the governor.

(5) Heads of the budget units may appeal to the department of finance from the decision of the budget officer regarding allotments.

(6) The incurrence of obligations will be controlled by the system of commitment voucher duly examined and approved.

(7) Depository banks are to be approved by the department of finance on recommendation of the state treasurer.

(8) Post-auditing and pre-auditing of all funds and budget units will be provided at regular intervals.

(9) All warrants issued by the auditor must specify the fund against which they are drawn.

MANY CRITICISMS

Various opponents of the reorganization act and the budget and financial administration act have criticized both bills as "a jumble written by somebody who knows nothing of the principles of economic state government or who deliberately declined to write according to them." The reorganization bill has been described as "ripper legislation."

To prove this many point out that the bill contains some thirty-five pages of which about one-third are devoted to the reorganization of the insurance department and the bureau of fire prevention and rates. The bill takes the insurance functions from the office of the auditor of public accounts and gives them to the state treasurer, and then places the

functions of the bureau of fire prevention and rates in a new insurance department headed by a commissioner appointed by the governor. In the bitter factional fight during the recent session of the legislature, the auditor refused to line up with the governor and his forces while the treasurer followed the leadership of the administration forces. Thus the reorganization bill rewarded the treasurer for his loyalty and took these important functions from the auditor as the reward for his disloyalty. Suffice it to say, the bill which passed did not follow the recommendations of Griffenhagen in regard to the insurance function. Griffenhagen recommended a department of banking and insurance but the administration forces who rewrote the original bill preferred a separate department of insurance, a separate department of banking and securities, and the transfer of the functions of the determination of insurance bonds to the office of treasurer.

CHANGES IN FORM, NOT SUBSTANCE

The bills have been criticized on the grounds that they provide no real reorganization. The purposes of the administration act as stated therein to provide "a uniform, integrated, and comprehensive plan of organization," have not been realized. While some agencies are merged, combined, or abolished, it may be stated that the changes are not likely to afford the slightest chances for economy, since the purported merges are made ineffectual in so many cases by provisions that agencies said to be merged are to continue as before. As an example of this the bill purports to merge the state board of veterinary examiners and the live stock sanitary board with the department of agriculture. But after stating that they shall be under the department, the act provides that each shall remain an "independent agency in the manner and form as now provided by law."

Critics of the bill point out that nowhere in it is there a clear summarized statement of the proposed set-up. The acts are also criticized on the ground that they fail to recognize distinctions among officers, managing boards, and departments as suggested. This is probably the most valid criticism that can be made of the acts. There are many examples of this failure; one or two will suffice. The commissioner of confederate pensions is named as head of a "division" in the military department, but nevertheless he continues with all his present duties and functions. The state highway commission is also continued without recognition of departmental status.

Undoubtedly there are some functions which according to the reorganization bills are given inappropriate allocations. An example of this is shown in the inclusion of the state library commission under the department of public property, the inclusion of state parks in the same department, and the administration of confederate pensions in the military department. It may be said that the bill really does violate the basic principle that similar functions should be grouped in the same department.

SCRAMBLED STATUS OF BOARDS

It is also said that there are numerous boards and commissions, some of them ex-officio, vested with complete administrative powers. Most of these boards and commissions which are recognized in the act were in existence before its passage and the act simply continues them either as independent agencies or as nominal parts of other agencies, while all their present powers are retained. As a corollary to this criticism many opponents of the act state that there is an unworkable and absurd division of functions among unwieldy ex-officio boards of the old-style discredited type.

(Continued on Page 208)

Philadelphia's Bar Primary

How one machine-ridden city seeks to improve its judiciary by professional endorsement of candidates

F. L. REINHOLD

Swathmore College

THE increasing use of the bar primary as a device for electing judges indicates that it may become a permanent political institution, thus disposing of Bryce's indictment against the popular election of judges in the United States.

Philadelphia is the last of an imposing list of cities that are finding the bar primary a satisfactory method of raising the calibre of the bench. Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Duluth, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and St. Louis all have experimented with this device.

Philadelphia has profited by the experience of her predecessors, and has incorporated several new variations of her own. In November of 1932 the Bar Association authorized a bar primary in a by-law passed for the avowed purpose of making "available for the general public the collective judgments of lawyers through their Bar Association as to the qualifications of candidates for judicial offices."

To execute this purpose, an appointed committee prepared ballots and directions for distribution to all bona fide members of the association. Every effort was made to protect the secrecy of the ballot.

There were six municipal court vacancies and five common pleas vacancies to be filled in the fall of 1933. The bar primary subsequently centered upon these offices.

First of all, a ballot was circulated to ascertain the support enjoyed by sitting judges. The questionnaire for this purpose contained the following points:

1. Have you appeared before him (the sitting judge in question) in court?
2. Have you had other opportunities to judge his judicial qualifications?
3. Do you have confidence both in his personal and intellectual honesty?
4. Has he adequate legal ability?
5. Is he attentive and fair-minded?
6. Is he patient, courteous, and of a judicial temperament?
7. Do you regard him as an able judge?
8. Should he be recommended to the public for election?

The ballot and questionnaire were not signed but were sealed in an envelope provided for the purpose. However, in order to prevent a "stuffing of the ballot box"—evidently considered not beneath the dignity of lawyers—each sealed ballot had to be accompanied by a signed certificate witnessed by at least one other person. A firm of certified public accountants tallied the ballots. The outside envelope was opened and the certificate was checked against a qualified voter's list. The sealed ballots were then placed in receptacles and opened at a later date.

All together 1707 letters were mailed out and 920 votes were counted—11 of the ballots being discarded as imperfect.

The task of counting these ballots was not an easy one, since they contained a total of 64,488 separate marks.

As a result of this first ballot, the Bar Association indorsed seven of the sitting judges and rejected four. Incidentally, the unlucky four decided to run without the association's indorsement. All they had to do was to obtain two hundred signatures to a petition, whereupon they received a place on the official general primary ballot automatically. Nevertheless, the loss of the support of the Bar Association considerably lowered their prestige.

SECOND BALLOT CIRCULATED

If all of the sitting judges had been indorsed, it would have been unnecessary to conduct another bar primary. As it was, another batch of 1707 ballots was mailed out with an ultimate count of 879. The second questionnaire dealt with other possible candidates and differed but slightly from the first. It asked:

1. Do you have confidence in his intellectual as well as his personal honesty?
2. Has he adequate legal ability?
3. Has he a judicial temperament?
4. Is he diligent in dispatching business?
5. Is he courteous in his professional relations?

As a result of this second ballot, the Bar Association was able to nominate four new candidates to take the place of four of the sitting judges.

The cost of the primary was approximately \$3456.00. This sum did not include the expenses of active campaigning for election after the municipal primary was over.

In brief, the Bar Association made three reports to the public.

1. The first report indorsed seven of the eleven sitting judges.

2. The second report indorsed four new candidates.

3. The third report presented the complete slate to the voters of Philadelphia.

This final recommendation took the form of a half-page, large, heavy-type advertisement.

ATTENTION VOTERS!

*Vote the Bar Association Ticket
In the Interest of
an Honest, Independent,
Non-Partisan Judiciary.*

THE

PHILADELPHIA BAR ASSOCIATION

Recommends

to the

Voters of Philadelphia

The Following Candidates For
Judicial Office

Mark (x) as Indicated Below

These candidates received the indorsement of the Philadelphia Bar Association as the result of a secret ballot taken to determine the fitness of sitting judges and candidates for judicial office. They are worthy of your support.

Philadelphia newspapers generally interested themselves in the fact that the Bar Association had entered into active politics for the first time. It was thought that the association might possibly have an eye to building up a considerable machine to wrest some spoils from the Vare machine and the Pinchot factions. Actually, a three-cornered fight did not develop because the Republican organization (the Vare machine) came out in favor of several of the Bar Association's candidates. This was confusing to the public, since it seemed to be an unholy alliance for unholy purposes. It is to the Association's credit that while glad to have the added support for its candidates, it was visibly embarrassed by its friendly enemy.

The association and the Vare machine had one thing in common, however—a decided distaste for Governor Pinchot. The bar said that it was driven to active participation in politics because, on the one hand, the governor consistently refused to recognize the association's recommendations for filling unexpired terms, and, on the other hand, because the Vare machine consistently secured the election of inferior henchmen to judicial posts.

ALLIANCE COMPLICATES ELECTION

Because of the alliance between the Republican organization and the Philadelphia Bar Association, the results of the election are not clearly defined. The support of the machine robbed the association's victory, such as it was, of much of its glory. Six of the eleven candidates backed by the association were elected, but it must be added in all fairness, that all of these were sitting judges and might easily have been re-elected without the bar's support. Then, too, three of the four sitting judges who did not receive the Bar Association's indorsement were nevertheless returned. Furthermore, not one of the new candidates offered by the association was elected, though the most promising of these withdrew his nomination in order to run for a non-judicial office.

On the basis of these results, however, certain arguments may be made regarding the value of the bar primary.

1. Through it the public can learn the expert opinion of the bar concerning judicial candidates.

2. Since lawyers are in daily contact with the bench, judges should be courteous and coöperative with them; heretofore their irresponsibility has led to inexcusable domination of bench over bar.

3. The quality of the bench may be improved. Many able lawyers are unwilling to enter politics without the in-

dorsement and support of the Bar Association.

4. The custom of returning sitting judges is vicious and should be broken.

5. The *esprit de corps* of the bar as a whole is increased.

Opposition to such a primary takes the following form:

1. Personal relations between bench and bar should not be enhanced as a means of gaining political support.

2. Sitting judges ought to be returned when they have done their work well. Under such circumstances it is a protection for a judge to know that his seat is safe.

3. A bare majority is a great hardship on candidates defeated within the Bar Association.

4. The bar primary may be only a gesture on the part of the Bar Association. It may not be followed by active participation.

5. The Bar Association is relatively a small group of the whole body of lawyers, since in Philadelphia only 1707 of 4200 practicing attorneys are qualified members of it.

6. The Bar Association should not participate in politics.

7. The expense is almost prohibitive.

SYSTEM WORKING ELSEWHERE

For a detailed description of the workings of the bar primary in municipalities other than Philadelphia, the reader is referred to an article by Professor Landis of the Harvard Law School in the *New York State Bar Association Bulletin* for April 1932.

In Chicago the bar primary is conceded to be successful in producing the election of supported candidates only where the Bar Association has been a deciding factor in a factional contest.

Cleveland has a very elaborate system with a heavy financial outlay. The

bar primary has been extremely successful there, because it has not had to contend with a party machine.

The Denver Bar Association claims for it the advantage of making judges "more courteous to the bar and more successful in decisions." In that city the primary calls for two votes—the first reduces the candidates to twice the number of vacancies; the second reduces the number to one for each vacancy.

In Detroit the system has not been very successful—possibly because the bar does not follow its indorsement by active political campaigning but merely announces its slate in the newspapers.

Pittsburgh has used the system for a number of years.

Duluth started its bar primary in 1932, but it is still too novel to be pronounced successful or unsuccessful.

BLUE GRASS STATE

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Examples of this are the department of finance and budgetary control and the department of public property. As described above it would seem that the organization of these departments in no sense of the word guarantees direct responsibility since control over the departments is divided between a designated head and an ex-officio board.

In spite of all the alleged defects of these bills, it must be said that these acts are steps in the right direction. The chief merit of the measures is found in the fact that they do centralize greater responsibility over the administration in the hands of the governor and give him something more to do than grant pardons and issue colonel commissions. They tend to make him governor in fact as well as in theory, and this is an improvement over anything Kentucky has had previously.

There is one very important factor which many students of administration hoped would be included in the reorganization of the administration branch of the state, and this is conspicuously absent in these bills. Griff-

Because Philadelphia is a machine-ruled metropolis, and because the present governor is hostile to this particular city, the Bar Association primary here is hailed as a welcome move by city voters. Its results, therefore, ought not to be judged by the percentage of successful elections but by the more intangible evidence of a machine responding to pressure.

The fact remains that, good or bad, here is a new mechanism in the popular election of judges that is sufficiently widespread now to be formally recognized by students of political science throughout the country. Who knows but that the bar primary may develop into a bar election of all judges? Certain it is that the best method of electing judges has not yet been discovered. This device will bear consideration.

enhagen and Associates, in their report and recommendations to the governor's advisory council, recommended the introduction of a merit system in the state civil service, and pointed out that this was the chief method of effecting economies in state government. This proposal was not considered by the advisory council and was not even mentioned in the legislature when the council's recommendations were under consideration. In a politically-minded society the merit system is difficult of attainment and it may be said that neither Kentucky nor any other state will get beyond the primer in administration until the merit principle is adopted and given an opportunity to demonstrate its worth.

With the adoption of these reorganization measures, even with all their defects, Kentucky looks forward to a more efficient and more responsible administration. The possibilities of good and the possibilities of evil, as is true with any reorganization act, have been enlarged. Kentuckians hereafter will know where to place responsibility when anything goes wrong in the administration.

The Information Bureau In German Cities

American officials
might learn much
from German municipal
reporting technique

CLARENCE E. RIDLEY

*Executive Director
International City Managers' Association*

As one of seventeen Fellows selected by the Oberlaender Trust of Philadelphia to study some phases of municipal administration in Germany in the summer of 1933, I selected as my main interest the municipal information bureau which is found in practically all of the larger German cities of more than 100,000 population and in many of the smaller cities.¹ A few cities had set up such an office before the war but the wider participation of the German people in public affairs under the republic greatly accelerated the creation of these information bureaus in order that the new-born interest of the people in municipal affairs might be fostered.

ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION BUREAUS

With few exceptions the director of the bureau is appointed by and is responsible solely to the burgomaster. This intimate relationship with the administrative head of the city is strongly preferred by the bureau directors to any other method of control. As a rule the staffs are quite small. In Leipzig, for instance, in addition to the director, there was but one assistant and one stenographer. At Hanover where the

bureau assumed more than the usual functions there was a staff of five.

The main object of the information bureau is to furnish news to the press but this is by no means the extent of its activities. Its duties are really two-fold: first, servicing department heads, and second, servicing the public.

The service rendered department heads generally includes the following:

- (1) Informing department heads relative to legislative enactments affecting their departments,
- (2) Maintaining a clipping bureau of news notes and articles of particular interest to the several departments, sending them to department heads together with comments and suggestions,
- (3) Refuting unfair attacks on municipal officials,
- (4) Editing and preparing for the press news items concerning departmental activities,
- (5) Initiating news items concerning departmental matters,
- (6) Coöperating with the various departments in putting on special exhibits,
- (7) Editing and publishing departmental bulletins.

The service of the bureau to the public consists of reporting matters of general interest to the public by means of the daily press, arranging radio broadcasts, and furnishing speakers for civic

¹Cities visited and populations were: Hamburg (1,160,000), Leipzig (700,000), Hanover (450,000), Königsberg (300,000), Free City of Danzig (230,000), Coblenz (60,000), Schneidmühl (43,000), and Marienburg (25,000).

and other group meetings. Contact with the press is maintained through press conferences, special interviews, and by furnishing copy which the press is at liberty to publish and comment on as it sees fit.

ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS

A private interview with the representatives of eight newspapers in Hanover disclosed that there was absolutely no feeling that the slightest censorship was being exercised over city hall news nor that the reporting bureau was attempting in any way to maintain the present regime in office by "coloring" the releases.

The success of the information bureau in German cities has been due very largely to the high calibre of the heads of these bureaus. Without exception I found them to be men of exceptional attainments receiving salaries comparable to those paid other department heads. There exists some difference of opinion among the officials themselves as to whether training in journalism is preferable to experience in the administrative service or vice versa. It would seem essential, however, that the director should be thoroughly acquainted with the administrative service and that he have a broad background in economics and public administration. It is refreshingly true that the prestige of the position has attracted to the office a group of exceptionally well-qualified men.

CONCLUSIONS

The German official is far ahead of the American administrator in appreciating the need for public education in a democracy where periodically the people are called upon either to return or retire its official family. In thorough German manner they have set up the machinery to keep the public constantly informed and I do not intend to do the movement an injustice by making the

observation that the cities are not realizing upon the full possibilities of this unique and valuable institution.

For example, it was disappointing to learn that the bureaus do not issue timely bulletins, covering some important phase of the government, for distribution to the public and press. Another disappointment was that they do not compile and publish an attractive monthly, quarterly, or annual report for popular consumption, such as is being done so well in a dozen or more American cities even without the stimulus of a special agency to do the task. However, this need for special bulletins and annual reports is to some extent met by the German newspapers which carry a large amount of municipal information originating from the municipal information office and the average German is accustomed to "study" these often rather heavy articles on city business.

COORDINATION NEEDED

I was disappointed, too, in the seeming lack of coördination between the information bureau and the statistical bureau—another agency entirely novel to American cities and which collects and compiles almost every conceivable type of statistics from the movement of populations from one part of the city to another, to markets, prices, and consumption. In but one city, Coblenz, did I find these closely related offices combined. The main reason for such a separation was that the statistical bureau required a statistician as its head and that in some cities it is in charge of the registration of voters and supervises the conduct of general elections.

Even so I am convinced that they should be combined and thus set up an agency that would at once not only collect the information, but could also collate, interpret, and disseminate it while it was timely and of current in-

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A Missouri County Wants a New Deal

How a weak county
system piles up local
costs

JOSEPH H. GRAND

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ST. Louis County, Mo., furnishes an instructive example of President Roosevelt's recent commentaries on "oxcart government" in American community life. It illustrates also the opportunities at home for taxpayers to make government less burdensome and expensive.

According to the 1920 federal census the population of St. Louis County was about 100,000. In 1930 the population of the county had grown to 211,000, with almost half of it concentrated in a district divided into fifteen incorporated cities or towns bordering the city of St. Louis on the west. Approximately 67,000 of the inhabitants of the county live in six of the larger municipalities, namely, University City, Clayton, Kirkwood, Webster Groves, Maplewood, and Richmond Heights.

The growth in population of St. Louis County is attributable largely to the migration of erstwhile residents of the city of St. Louis, the great majority of whom have retained their business connections or employment in the city of St. Louis. With the exception of neighborhood business districts, most of the development has consisted of the building of homes and apartments. There has been comparatively little, if any, development of industrial sections, so that the burden of taxation falls largely upon the home and the flat or apartment owner.

To all intents and purposes the district comprising the fifteen small municipalities is one community. The same general class of people live in each of them and the district is just as much urban as any of the residential districts which are part of the city of St. Louis. The major traffic arteries running through the district link the cities and towns into one unit. Yet three or four of the municipalities each have jurisdiction of a part of a road. Big Bend Road, for instance, runs through University City, Richmond Heights, Clayton, Maplewood, and Webster Groves; the Hanley Road runs through University City, Clayton, and Richmond Heights; part of the Clayton Road is in Richmond Heights and part of it is in Clayton. As a matter of fact, motorists who are apt to violate traffic ordinances have the choice of paying a fine either in Clayton or in Richmond Heights, depending upon whether they are driving on the north or the south side of the road at the time they are apprehended.

The population and the improvements in the district are generally so dense that it is not difficult to find houses and apartments part of which are in one city and part in another. Not only strangers, but most of the inhabitants themselves would be unable to tell where the limits of their respective cities end and those of the neighboring

town begin. The public utilities serving the district disregard the political boundaries altogether. It is undeniable that the people of the district have a common interest in the problems of major streets and highways, transportation, trunk line sewers, health and sanitation, city planning and zoning, police and fire protection, public utility rates and service. Nevertheless, each of the municipalities is a distinct and separate entity. Each has its own set of officials, each has its own mayor, its own engineers and their assistants, its own chief of police, its own fire chief and fire department, its police judge, its own inspectors, collector, and city clerk.

HOW THE PAY-ROLLS GREW

With but few exceptions the administrative officials of each of the towns serve but part time; and in most of them meetings of the municipal assembly are held in the evenings once a week or once every two weeks. Each of the larger cities has its own school board and here and there a board of park commissioners. Each of the municipalities and each of the school boards assess, collect, and disburse taxes independently of one another; and the school boards are entirely independent of the municipal government of the cities in which they are located. Whatever coöperation there is between these many units of government is wholly voluntary, since the statutes of the state provide no method for joint action upon common problems.

There has been little, if any, change in the county system of government in the last decade. The affairs of the county generally are still being administered by the county court consisting of three judges, and there are, of course, the county engineer, county clerk, county collector, county assessor, the sheriff, the constables, and the justices of the peace, whose salaries come out

of the general revenue fund of the county, to which taxpayers in the incorporated districts make substantial contribution. There are several reasons why so many units of government have sprung up in this district, but it is fair to say that the principal one is the fact that the county form of government, designed many years ago for a strictly rural community, is wholly and entirely inadequate to the needs of a district which is urban in every respect; and it may safely be said that unless some change is made in the law or in the system of county government so as to bring it in line with present day needs, the units of government in St. Louis County will multiply and increase with the growth of population in the county.

Now, what has all this meant to the taxpayers of the district? An examination of the reports of expenditures for 1932 by six of the largest of these units and a comparison of these expenditures with those made by larger municipalities for similar or like functions clearly show that the multiplicity of independent units of government in a district which to all intents and purposes is one community is quite expensive.

SWOLLEN COSTS

The cities of Clayton, University City, Richmond Heights, Kirkwood, Maplewood, and Webster Groves had a population, according to the federal census of 1930, of approximately 67,000 inhabitants. In 1932 the taxpayers of these six municipalities paid to the six mayors \$11,200.00 in salary. Some of the mayors have secretaries and some are allowed a contingent fund which is an additional charge upon the general revenue. The number of aldermen or councilmen in each of the cities varies from two councilmen in Richmond Heights, which was reported as having a population of 9,100 in 1930, to ten aldermen in Clayton, whose population

was officially reported at approximately 9,600. The total amount paid aldermen and councilmen was \$23,000.00. The six chiefs of police received salaries aggregating the amount of approximately \$17,000.00, exclusive of allowances for the use of automobiles which is the practice in some of the towns. The six city attorneys, who devote only part of their time to their official duties, were paid \$12,000.00 and the six police judges were paid about \$5,000.00, the salaries ranging from \$360.00 per annum in Kirkwood to about \$1,700.00 in University City.

Each of the cities, of course, has its own city clerk and collector, although in one or two of them the offices of collector and city clerk are combined into one. The amount paid in the year 1932 to collectors and city clerks was approximately \$29,000.00. The assessment upon real estate in this district for the year 1932 was about \$115,000,000.00, and real estate taxes, of course, furnish the largest source of revenue.

A FEW COMPARISONS

Now, compare the sum paid to the mayors of the six cities by this district of 67,000 inhabitants and \$115,000,000.00 valuation to the amount expended by larger communities for the services of trained executives.

The city of Flint, Michigan, with a population of 156,400, paid its city manager the sum of \$5,500.00 per annum;

The city of Dayton, Ohio, with a population in excess of 200,000 inhabitants, paid its city manager \$9,600.00;

The city of Berkeley, California, with a population of 82,000, paid its city manager \$10,000.00;

The city of Miami, Florida, with a population of 110,000, paid its city manager \$4,000.00;

The city of Rochester, New York, with a population of 328,000, paid its city manager the sum of \$10,000.00.

The city of St. Louis, with a population of 800,000 and a real estate assessment of \$1,250,000,000.00, appropriated for the year beginning April 11, 1933, and ending April 9, 1934, the total sum of \$57,060.00 for the salaries of its mayor and twenty-eight aldermen, as against an expenditure of approximately \$34,000.00 for the pay of the mayors and members of the board of council of the six cities mentioned whose total population is 67,000 and whose total real estate assessment is \$115,000,000.00.

The city of St. Louis has two police court judges who have jurisdiction over violations of city ordinances. By ordinance the salary of each of them is fixed at \$3,000.00 per annum. The six police judges in University City, Clayton, Richmond Heights, Maplewood, Kirkwood, and Webster Groves received an aggregate salary of \$5,100.00 for the year 1932, although it is quite certain that the number of cases brought before the six police judges was only a fraction of those that were brought in the city courts of the city of St. Louis.

Many other interesting comparisons can be made and they will all establish the proposition that multiplicity of small "layers of government" is an expensive luxury. Furthermore, anyone who knows how well intentioned the various officials of the respective cities under discussion are, will understand that the fault is not with them but rather with the system.

THE COUNTY WANTS ITS SHARE

In addition to the cost of maintaining their respective local governments, the taxpayers in this district make substantial contribution toward the support and maintenance of the county government. The taxpayers of the six incorporated towns in 1932 contributed approximately \$400,000.00 to the general revenue fund of the county, excluding the assessment made against them for the payment of service charges and principal

of the county's bond issues, and exclusive also of the percentage retained by the county out of the assessment and collection of a tax of twenty-five cents on each hundred dollars' assessed valuation for road and bridge purposes.

The general officers of the county render little or no service in the incorporated territories. The county court, consisting of three judges who receive approximately \$15,000.00 per annum, concerns itself mostly with looking after problems in the unincorporated areas of the county. The sheriff and constables, though they do police duty along with the service of papers in civil actions, confine most of their activities as peace officers to districts outside of the limits of the various cities, so that for police protection these cities in 1932 paid in the aggregate for the personnel and equipment of their police departments the sum of about \$121,000.00.

The county does not furnish any fire protection and the county engineer and his department, as well as the clerk of the county court and his assistants, limit their activities largely to matters and problems of no direct interest or concern to the taxpayers in the incorporated cities and towns of the county.

That a tremendous saving in the cost

of administrative officials can be had by consolidation and by delegation of some of the functions to one central organization seems to be obvious. Such consolidation and centralization would not only result in a saving of administrative costs through a reduction of the personnel of officials and subordinates, but would also reduce the costs through savings on central purchasing and would eliminate the overlapping of function and duplication of effort and service.

Attempts to consolidate the city of St. Louis with the county of St. Louis and to provide a system of government for the densely populated district of the county which would fit its character as an urban community have failed. Just what system is most desirable is a matter for decision by experts after careful examination of all of the facts. It may be that some form of county government which will make for centralization of authority in one central body and which will be fairly representative and flexible enough so as to provide all of the services required by the urban district as well as that portion of the county which may still be considered suburban, will solve the problem. At any rate, there is here in our own backyard just as great an opportunity for relief of the taxpayer as there is in Washington.

THE INFORMATION BUREAU IN GERMAN CITIES

(Continued from Page 210)

terest. As it is, all these valuable data come out some time after the close of the year in a compendium of tables seemingly unrelated and certainly uninteresting. It would seem therefore that German cities could realize greater benefits from these two separate agencies if they were combined and if more attention were given to keeping the public informed on current municipal developments and problems.

I believe that the American public official, generally indifferent toward re-

porting to the public he serves, has much to learn from the techniques employed by the German municipal information bureaus. Through continuous and adequate reporting to the public in any city much of the misunderstanding about government can be removed, many of the difficulties of administration overcome, and that essential goodwill obtained which makes the public more willing to "foot the bill." I am sure the need for more adequate public reporting will some day be as widely appreciated in this country as it is in Germany, and may that day be hastened.

The Strangling Net of Special Rates

Most special rates
should be eliminated
if intelligent budget-
ing is to exist

KIRK H. PORTER

State University of Iowa

THE practice of fixing special rates for specific purposes probably is just as old as local government. Three hundred years ago, when our institutions of local self-government were being established in the New England colonies, this method of dealing with local finance was very much in evidence. Gathered together in town meeting it was the custom to determine how much the school master should be paid for the ensuing year (a very little!) and then to impose a "rate" to yield that amount. The same would be done for the purpose of maintaining the town hall, or the church, or to pay the town drummer, or the testers of beer. Thus at the very time of deciding to make an appropriation, adequate revenue would be guaranteed by fixing a particular rate for each service. This was very simple and naive; but it was also thoroughly sound, conservative, and altogether wholesome and safe. We may well yearn for those good old days of simple public finance.

However, we need not be any too thankful for the system which grew out of this practice and has persisted into modern times. The idea of having special rates has been exploited to an astonishing degree and the system must share much of the blame for the difficulties of local government today.

During the early period of each state's life as a new state, or during the

territorial period immediately preceding, the legislature would authorize county authorities to levy a certain maximum rate on all taxable property within their jurisdiction for "general" purposes. In addition they would grant power to levy one or two "special" rates, usually expressed in mills, for some specified purposes. Here lies the beginning of the procession of special rates that has appeared in so many states.

Soon the costs of maintaining county government increase a little bit. County authorities find the resources available under the rate for general purposes inadequate. An obvious way of relief is to get the legislature to authorize a "special" rate for some particular service that is, at the time, being financed out of the general fund. Suppose it be the care of the poor, or the building of highways, or the maintenance of the court. Pressure is brought to bear and the legislature authorizes a special rate of so many mills for highway maintenance. Under the rule of uniformity every county is authorized to apply this special rate, thus creating a special fund for the specified purpose. The general fund is thereby relieved a little and time goes on.

Pressure is constant, if not heavy—some counties always agitating and nagging for new rates. In addition to rates for highways come rates for poor relief, for court expense, and for other

vital purposes, all in course of time. But the pressure never relaxes, always there are *some* counties that are short in *some* funds. Inevitably they agitate for relief, and the list of special rates steadily grows, every county being allowed to levy each new rate although it may have been desperately needed by only a few.

SPECIAL RATES MULTIPLY

The pressure still continues. Certain funds prove to be wholly inadequate for some counties, and the idea is born of breaking up, or of splitting funds and producing two or more rates where formerly there was only one. Thus the rate for highways is divided, and we have a millage rate allowed for road *construction*, and another rate for *maintenance*. Bridges seem to be a burden, so the highway funds are relieved of bridges and a special rate is authorized for them. The rate for poor relief can easily be divided, and soon there appears one rate for maintaining the poor farm and another for outside relief. Then comes another millage rate to care for orphans. Thus the old rates are divided up and the list of special rates steadily grows.

Enthusiastic public-spirited people see new opportunities and special interest groups appear. A demand comes for a county library service. The county authorities are obdurate; a library cannot be financed out of the general fund. So the legislature is prevailed upon to authorize a tiny special rate for libraries and thus libraries come to pass. People are dissatisfied with the run-down appearance of rural cemeteries. Strong appeals in course of time produce a special rate for cemeteries. Then come new rates to provide special funds for the care of old soldiers. Another is needed to finance the new and laudable widows' pension program; or perhaps a new and thoroughly admirable

health unit scheme must have its special rate and special fund. Indeed a very important point in this connection is that each of these services is in itself altogether splendid and can stand on its own merits. No wonder legislatures are convinced when sincere and earnest people plead with them for health units, for widows' pensions, for old soldiers, and for orphans. And it should be borne in mind that it is no one legislature that grants them all. The list of special rates may grow slowly, but it steadily tends to grow.

There are some very insidious forces always at work. They are not necessarily evil in motive, but they produce evil results. Advocates of special rates are rarely willing to have the "general" rate increased a trifle in order to make their particular service possible. They lack confidence in the local authorities. They want the particular service positively guaranteed, so that a definite fund will surely be available which cannot be diverted for other purposes. With the best intentions in the world they want to make absolutely certain of their own pet project. Thus they want the rate to be mandatory and are much gratified when this is done. Hence these well-meaning, progressive people are themselves largely responsible for the procession of special rates. Local officials rarely object, indeed many times they themselves agitate for mandatory special rates. Such rates serve to relieve existing funds, and furthermore relieve the officials of all responsibility—they can blame the tax on the legislature.

VICIOUS CIRCLE DEVELOPS

But the most insidious evil of all lies in the simple fact that no given rate for a particular service can possibly be a suitable rate for that service in every county. *Some* counties are sure to find *some* rates inadequate for *some* purposes. Take bridges, for instance. How

absurd to assume that a given rate levied in each of a hundred counties will yield a suitable sum with which to construct bridges! Counties need bridges in proportion to the number of streams that need to be crossed; and the cost will vary as to the engineering difficulties. Counties of equal population, or of equal taxable value, may have very different needs. One may need five times as much for bridges as the other—and properly so. For some counties the uniform rate will be about right. Some counties will have a surplus in that particular fund, some will not have enough. And it is from those counties that run short on certain funds that people come and agitate insistently for more and higher rates. Of course they are quite justified.

So it is with the funds created for other purposes. Always there are *some* counties in which a given rate is inadequate for *some* service. And always they are at the door of the legislature asking for relief. They are not spend-thrifts—they are victims of a system. Thus the legislature is always surrounded with these people, all of whom have a genuine grievance. No wonder that legislatures succumb, and the procession of rates goes on. The system itself has within it these features which are sure to make for trouble.

SYSTEM NOT FLEXIBLE

Comes time of stress! Government expenditures *must* be reduced. Taxpayers' leagues come down upon the local officials. But the officials are caught in this strangling net of special rates. The mandatory rates cannot be touched. But if any of the rates are optional the authorities have a chance. Woe be to any service sustained by nothing more substantial than an optional rate! The authorities slash that service mercilessly. In desperation they cut "general" office expenses to a level

far below reasonable efficiency. Salaries of the unhappy employees are cut ruthlessly. Caught in this strangling net of special rates local authorities are unable to use their available resources wisely, budgeting becomes a farce, they slash where they can, let the chips fall where they may.

On to the legislature! If local authorities are hampered by this strangling net of special rates, the legislature must give relief! The legislature, earnestly desirous of reducing local costs, turns to these rates. Some particular rate is mentioned as one that can be reduced or abolished. Instantly loud protests come from those counties where that particular rate is already woefully inadequate, or from those people especially interested in the particular service involved. The legislature backs off; then in a gingerly way touches another rate—instantly another protest from other quarters! Everybody wants to reduce expenses, but mention any one rate and violent protest is immediately aroused. And these protests are all the more effective because they are honest, and justified. Those counties which protest *do* find certain rates too low. Of course they protest. In a word, the legislature itself is caught in this strangling net which has been woven through a period of half a century or more.

UNIFORM RATES IMPOSSIBLE

Thoughtless people run forward with statistics. Per capita statistical data pours forth in volume. It is shown beyond possibility of doubt—figures do not lie—that per capita cost of poor relief in county A is ever so much higher than per capita cost of poor relief in county B. As if a colony of millionaires would need to spend as much for poor relief as a district populated by an equal number of wretched coal miners! It is shown that per capita costs of highway construction vary tremendously,

and those counties having the highest per capita cost are held up to scorn. As if population had much to do with the cost of building a highway! One might as well solemnly estimate highway costs per squirrel! No uniform rule can possibly be fair to all.

Finding it next to impossible to accomplish anything by striking at particular rates, the legislature in desperation is likely to be driven to some sort of uniform, horizontal cut in all rates, in all taxing areas. This can be done without charges of favoritism; and the violent, intensive protests of the various groups are lost in a universal sigh of resignation. Every taxing area is ordered to reduce every rate by a certain per cent. Exemptions usually are afforded, to take care of bonded indebtedness, and to afford relief in case of unusual circumstances.

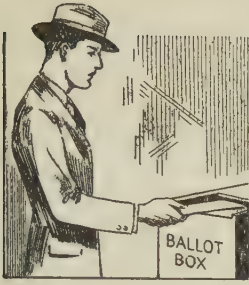
SLASHES OF RATES UNFAIR

No sooner does the horizontal slash go into effect than troubles begin to appear. Obviously, *certain* services in *certain* counties that were barely surviving under the existing rate are likely to be wrecked. But the grim irony of the horizontal cut always lies in the fact that it hurts worst those who have been doing best. The point could be illustrated in the case of a factory having a number of departments. The management cuts every department by exactly the same per cent. Not only may some absolutely vital department be wrecked, but those departments which have been managed wastefully and extravagantly can mend their ways and absorb the cut very easily. Those departments that have been well managed and were making every dollar count, are grievously injured. The horizontal, uniform cut always puts a premium on past wastefulness and imposes severe penalties on good management. And yet, uniform, horizontal cuts are usually defended on

the ground that they are absolutely fair and play no favorites!

Thus it is apparent that the system of special rates has brought us to a sorry pass. Its evils can be summarized briefly: 1. It inevitably breeds an insidious, constant, never-ceasing agitation for higher rates, for splitting rates, and for new rates. This urging comes from perfectly honest and sincere people and is thus all the more formidable. 2. It ultimately leaves local authorities tangled in a net, with most of their revenues ear-marked, and themselves unable to budget their resources wisely. 3. It puts the legislature in a very awkward position and leads them in desperation to apply remedies that work grave injustice and do not remedy the basic evil.

This last point is perhaps the most important one. It is the system that needs to be corrected. Horizontal slashing will not touch the evils inherent in the system. The real remedy lies in greatly reducing the number of special rates. Certain rates may be so important that they should remain. But most of them could go. It would mean, of course, that the rate for "general" purposes would have to be considerably increased. This would produce revenues out of which the local authorities would undertake to finance county services. It would then be possible to budget resources intelligently. Fear would be aroused that corrupt or stupid local officers would unduly curtail or abandon important services, or that they would squander large portions of their revenue on unimportant undertakings. That such a change in the system would greatly increase their power cannot be denied, that it would lead to more and greater abuses than are now practiced is open to question. Certainly, to cut this net of rates would open the way to intelligent budgeting, a thing that cannot be done so long as the net remains intact.



PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

EDITED BY GEORGE H. HALLETT, JR.

Continuing the Proportional Representation Review

Proportional representation ("P. R.") is a method of electing representative bodies which assures any group of voters the same share of the members elected that it has of the votes cast. It is designed to guarantee majority rule and minority representation. In its best form (the "Hare system") it makes primaries unnecessary and keeps scattering votes from being wasted by means of a preferential ballot. It thus makes impossible the domination of organized political minorities.

President Roosevelt Backs the Lea Amendment.—Newspaper dispatches of March 27 brought the significant news that President Roosevelt has declared openly for the Lea constitutional amendment. This amendment, as previously explained in these columns, does away with personal presidential electors and divides the electoral votes of each state among the presidential candidates in exact proportion to their popular votes within the state. The sponsor of the amendment is Congressman Clarence F. Lea of California, chairman of the House Democratic caucus, who is a member of the Council of the Proportional Representation League.

The President's support was announced in a statement to the House Rules Committee by Representative Jeffers of Alabama, chairman of the House Committee on the Election of President, Vice-President, and Representatives in Congress, which reported the amendment to the House with a unanimously favorable recommendation. The amendment is now on the calendar and needs only the granting of a rule by the Rules Committee to bring it to a vote.

Senator Norris of Nebraska recently introduced a similar constitutional amendment in the Senate. The Senate Judiciary Committee reported it, however, with amendments which would eliminate the proportional feature entirely, leaving it merely a measure to sub-

stitute electoral votes for personal electors, with the whole electoral vote of each state going to the plurality candidate as at present. The President's support of the proportional principle has been hoped for as a means of securing agreement between the two houses on the original form.

In announcing this support Representative Jeffers told the House Rules Committee that he had discussed the Lea-Norris amendment with the President and added, according to the *Associated Press*:

"I was authorized to say that he thought the principle of the proposition was sound and good and that he would be glad to see this proposition put through at this session of Congress."

Among the many advantages urged for the amendment are:

1. It would make much less likely the election of a president with less popular support than his principal rival, which has happened three times already.

2. It would make votes count for president wherever they are cast. At present a vote at the polls has no effect on the electoral vote unless cast for the plurality candidate within the state.

3. It would thus arouse interest even in the "sure" states and make candidates from such states available for nomination.

4. It would remove the tremendous

incentives to corruption and the concentration of legitimate efforts in the few large doubtful states which now usually determine the issue.

In urging support for the amendment the New York *World-Telegram* said editorially on March 7:

The American people at present are so well satisfied with the man they elected President it may seem scarcely an opportune time to fix their attention on weaknesses of the election system.

Yet the job of modernizing election laws must be done, if it is ever done, while a liberal is President of the United States. That is why a group in Congress who have worked for years to bring about this change are working harder than ever at this session.

Congressman Lea suggests that immediate supporting letters to Representatives and Senators, addressed to the House or Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D. C., would be helpful. He would be glad to receive copies of letters sent. The amendment is known as House Joint Resolution No. 136.

*

Court Decision Blocks P. R. —Manager Vote in Seattle.—In the summer of 1933 a City Manager Charter Amendment Club was formed in Seattle, with Mr. Robert Faris as chairman, Mr. Oliver T. Erickson as secretary, and with an executive board consisting of many of the prominent citizens of the city. A group of attorneys and other persons interested in the city manager plan had been working for several months prior in the preparation of a charter amendment. The proposed charter amendment provided for a council of nine, elected by proportional representation, and a city manager.

By December, some 13,000 signatures had been secured to the petition, approximately 10,000 valid signatures being necessary to put it on the ballot. When the petition was submitted to the council, that body asked for an opinion from the corporation counsel as to its legality. The corporation counsel replied in an opinion holding that the amendment was not in accordance with the state law governing the submission of initiative amendments, in that, first, it was a revision of the city charter and not an amendment, and second, it contained unrelated subjects. The council, acting upon this opinion, refused to place the amend-

ment on the ballot, or to have the petitions checked by the city comptroller.

The Charter Amendment Club petitioned the Superior Court of King County for a writ of mandamus to order the election commissioners to place the amendment upon the ballot. The court denied the petition, holding that the proposed amendment was contrary to the provision of the state law governing initiative amendments on the ground that proportional representation and the city manager plan were unrelated subjects. Judge Macfarlane pointed out that the state law provides for the submission by initiative of "a specified charter amendment", and cited decisions of the Supreme Court to the effect that distinct and unrelated propositions could not be submitted as one. He went on to hold that any proposition, however broad it may be, and however many sections of the charter it may amend, may be submitted, nevertheless, as an initiative amendment, provided it deals with related parts of the same subject or plan. The court did not pass upon the question of the constitutionality of proportional representation.

In holding that proportional representation was not an essential part of the city manager plan, the court made the following statement:

Concededly the method of proportional voting is not *necessary* to the city manager plan. Proportional voting can be detached from the plan and it still is a workable unified whole with all administrative authority properly centralized. The Hare system of voting is equally applicable to any form of government; it is not incidental or peculiar to any particular form. It is equally usable in the mayor-council form, and the advantages claimed for it are obtained in a mayor-council form of government in like manner as in a council-manager form. It belongs no more to a city manager plan than it does to a mayor-council plan, or to a commission plan.

The way is still open for the submission of a city manager plan and proportional representation to the voters, but as separate amendments. The ruling of the Judge in this particular case did not pass definitely upon the legality of such amendments, but a reading of the opinion would lead one to believe that had two amendments been submitted, one on proportional representation and one on the city

manager plan, they would have been held valid.

Just how the movement for the manager plan and proportional representation will be carried on in Seattle is not yet certain. It is possible that efforts will be made to revise the amendment, and submit it as two separate propositions at the municipal election a year

hence. On the other hand, an effort will probably be made in the next legislature to secure the necessary amendment to the state law legalizing the submission of a manager plan and proportional representation.

JOSEPH P. HARRIS

University of Washington

New York City Looks Toward Representative Government

An Address Delivered in the "You and Your Government" radio series, February 20, 1934, by the editor of this department, who is now Secretary of the Citizens Union of the City of New York

Tonight's broadcast has been aptly entitled "New York City Blazes the Trail." Within six short weeks legislation has been secured and a housing authority appointed for the most momentous attack on slum conditions in the history of the United States, the city's divided park departments have been consolidated under one efficient head, central purchasing has been initiated under the nation's foremost authority on municipal purchasing methods, unspeakable conditions of degradation and gangster control have been brought to light and largely corrected in the city prison on Welfare Island, an energetic drive against racketeering has been launched on all fronts, politicians have been ousted from control of the Tri-Borough Bridge Authority which they were using as a patronage mill, a serious taxi strike has been settled with steps taken toward setting up a taxi code, and in countless less spectacular ways the city has already been given a new deal. I do not think any civic worker or public-spirited citizen can regard most of the group of men and women with whom Mayor LaGuardia has surrounded himself with less than sincere enthusiasm. Several of the group you will have the opportunity of meeting over the radio at this hour each Tuesday for the next three weeks.

But the most encouraging part of the new picture is that the mayor and his associates are building for the future. The revision of New York's outworn city charter is not to be lost sight of in the urgency of immediate tasks. Reform administrations have come and gone, leaving the structure of government unchanged and little more than a savory memory behind them. This administration knows better.

I shall confine my remarks tonight to the particular aspect of charter revision which seems to me most important—a change in the method of election which will make any future relapse into complete domination by political spoilsmen forever impossible. The change is known as proportional representation, because it assures to every group of voters representation in proportion to its voting strength. This method was recommended by the last New York City charter commission in 1922 and is now being strongly urged by Judge Seabury and other civic leaders. The proposal is to apply it to a single-chamber legislative body for the city as has been done with such strikingly good results in Cincinnati.

Considered as a representative body the present board of estimate is obviously lopsided in favor of the administration and the board of aldermen lopsided against it. Since the latter fault is the more serious as things stand today, I want to give some of the evidence in regard to it. Though this evidence comes from New York City, you will have no trouble in duplicating it in any city in the land where the old-fashioned methods of election are still in vogue.

A DISTORTED BOARD OF ALDERMEN

In last fall's aldermanic election the Democratic and Recovery parties together polled 53 per cent of the votes—a bare majority. They elected 75 per cent of the members.

In Brooklyn the candidates endorsed by the Democratic organization polled 49 per cent of the votes—not quite half. They secured 92 per cent of the Brooklyn delegation.

In Staten Island the luck of the electoral gamble happened to fall to the other side. There the Republicans with the help of the City Fusion Party not only secured representation for the first time in years but elected all three members, though they had but 59 per cent of the votes.

A Democratic majority of the whole board—33 members out of 65—was elected by exactly one-sixth of the valid votes cast in the city.

The previous election had been even worse in misrepresentation. At that time the Democrats polled 65 per cent of the votes and elected 98½ per cent of the board. One lone Republican survived.

THE RECORD OF EIGHTEEN ELECTIONS

Analysis of the eighteen aldermanic elections held since the consolidation of the city makes the case for electoral reform still more conclusive. Here are some of the facts:

In eight of the elections—nearly half—a party with only a minority of the votes elected a majority of the members.

In more than a fifth of all the aldermanic district contests a minority has won out at the expense of a divided majority.

Forty-two per cent of all the votes cast have been wasted on losing candidates.

In the last seven elections Democratic votes have been worth from three to twenty-five times as much as Republican votes in securing representation.

In the same seven elections the Socialists have polled every time from four to ten times

as many votes as the number of Democratic votes for each Democratic member elected, and have elected no aldermen at all.

It has never taken as much as one-third of the votes cast to elect a majority of the board for the controlling party.

In short, our method of trying to secure a representative body has violated every major tenet of American democracy. We have not had majority rule. We have not had fair representation for minorities. We have not had even an approach to equality of voting power.

WHAT P. R. WOULD DO

New York is normally a Democratic city. A fair method of election would normally secure a Democratic majority on the city's legislative body. But in that Democratic majority it would secure fair representation for the hundreds of thousands of Democrats who believe in honest, efficient city government and who have ordinarily been eliminated in the primaries. The representatives of these Democrats, together with the representatives of Republicans, Socialists, and independents, could effectively block the spoils system from any attempted return.

That is exactly the sort of thing that has happened in Cincinnati under proportional representation for five successive elections. The new election method is concededly one of the major reasons why that once corrupt and misgoverned city has become a beacon light for workers for good government in all parts of the land. We hope to light a beacon equally bright here in New York City.

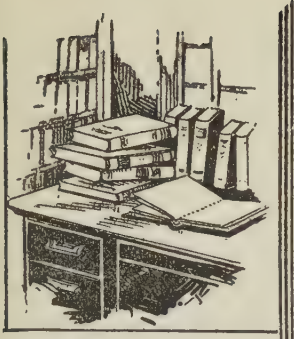
ELECTION OF NEW YORK ALDERMEN¹ November 7, 1933

Party ²	Votes Cast	Seats in Proportion to Votes	Seats Won	Percentage of Votes	Percentage of Seats
Democratic and Recovery	997,601	34	49	52.7%	75.4%
Republican and City Fusion	782,270	27	16	41.3%	24.6%
Socialist	75,827	3	0	4. %	0 %
Others	38,992	1	0	2. %	0 %
Totals	1,894,690	65	65	100 %	100 %

¹From *The Searchlight*, published by the Citizens Union of the City of New York, March 1934.

²There was a great deal of overlapping between the endorsements of the Democratic and

Recovery Parties on the one hand and the Republican and City Fusion Parties on the other. These parties have therefore been combined although in a number of cases their candidates opposed each other.



RECENT BOOKS REVIEWED

EDITED BY EDNA TRULL

100 Years of Land Values in Chicago.
By Homer Hoyt. Chicago, University of
Chicago Press, 1933. 519 pp. \$5.00.

In his *100 Years of Land Values in Chicago* Homer Hoyt has described in simple, forceful language not only what happened to real estate during that century, but the causes back of these happenings. For booms and depressions he has marshalled the facts to show that topographical features, industrial and commercial expansion, local, state and national politics, transportation, and, perhaps most of all, mob psychology, has each had a large part in determining the value of land in the city of Chicago. To this reviewer (not a resident of Chicago) the book is intensely interesting from cover to cover; from the beginning to the end there is scarcely a dull page in it. It is the history of a dynamic community as recorded in its real estate values. It is a simply-told but fascinating narrative of facts that were and are and, save for the lucid dissertation in Appendix I, part C, makes no pretension to being a textbook.

The arrangement of the text is logical. In Part I the author discusses the historical relations between Chicago's physical growth and land value fluctuations, while Part II is largely devoted to analyses of the reasons for these fluctuations. Appendix I is devoted principally to an exposition of the technique of real estate operations in Chicago. Appendix II describes the methods employed in determining the values quoted in the book. The smaller appendices are followed by several tables of statistical information, a bibliography, and a very complete index.

About the only important departure from

the narrative into the argumentative occurs in Appendix I under the title "The Fundamental Basis of Land Values: Capitalization of Net Income," in which the author expounds very clearly the basis of the income theory of determining land value and illustrates intelligibly the errors of conclusion that may arise from its use. This reviewer is in accord with Mr. Hoyt's conclusion (p. 454) that income analysis is the best test of what land value ought normally to be, but does not endorse as a corollary thereto that the income residuum is, in all cases, the gauge of land value.

The book describes the various booms and their subsequent deflation simply but vividly. It outlines their causes; portrays their effects. No one can read Part I without wondering why the debacle of 1929-1933 had not been foreseen and guarded against.

There is only one criticism which this reviewer wishes to make: That is the extreme reduction of most of the maps scattered throughout the book. They are so small that magnification is necessary to read many of the notations thereon.

The author is to be highly commended for the liberal use of supporting data, in both tabular and graphic form. Much of this is informative and helpful for students of land economics. For instance, the graph on page 327 is illustrative of the dependency of commercial frontage rentals upon pedestrian traffic. Similarly, that upon page 352 shows very forcefully that he who invests in real property at its peaks would secure more increment by purchasing 5 per cent bonds.

The book as a whole exhibits great capacity for exploration into and orderly arrangement

of a mass of detail, and a happy faculty for transmuting bygone musty records into a vital presentation of a phase of urban development that cannot fail to interest the economist, student or master.

CUTHBERT E. REEVES

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Current Monetary Issues. By Leo Pasvol'sky. Washington, D. C., The Brookings Institution, 1933. 192 pp. \$1.50.

Dr. Pasvol'sky has prepared an excellent review of the events in the international and national monetary field during 1932 and 1933, together with a brief analysis of the gold purchase plan adopted in this country in October of last year. Of the 130 pages of the text approximately 100 are devoted to a survey of the experts' conference at Geneva a year ago (at which the agenda for the London Economic Conference was prepared), the London Economic Conference and the shifts in American policy up to October.

The convening of the London conference under unfavorable circumstances, the predominance of monetary questions, and its disruption are pictured in interesting fashion. Those critical of our part in this conference and inclined to blame Washington for its failure should read the chapters on the conference carefully. The factors accounting for the shifts in the American position are clarified and, of more significance, is the fact brought out that the conference might have failed because of other issues even had the monetary ones been settled satisfactorily.

The importance of war debts and the disputes over commercial policy, tariffs, and quotas might have disrupted the meeting as easily as did the American position on exchange stabilization.

Dr. Pasvol'sky is to be commended for his balanced and moderate criticism of the gold purchase plan. He does not cite the history of fiat money in France nearly two centuries ago nor the despoliation of European insurance companies after the war; rather he presents an analysis of the working of the plan in our own economic environment with existing conditions. He contends that any price rise initiated by increases in the gold price would be unpredictable and result in monetary uncertainty with its attendant evils. The experience with our monetary pol-

icy from April to November is reviewed, showing that the gold price could not even control foreign exchange precisely, much less commodity prices. Furthermore, the experience of other devaluations since 1931 (England, Sweden, Japan) is surveyed to show that commodity prices did not behave according to the theory (compensated dollar) back of the gold purchase plan. On this point the reader may wish that the author had presented a more complete analysis of these other "experiments" with price data broken up into import, export, agricultural, and industrial groups, to show the aggregate effects of these devaluations.

The author believes that the international gold standard is essential for prosperity and recovery. For those who similarly decry monetary uncertainty and nationalistic monetary policies this book will serve as a valuable catechism. Only one serious typographical error (on p. 27) was noted. The documentary appendix is unusually complete, embracing official publications from the Geneva meeting down to the Roosevelt speech announcing the gold plan.

BERT C. GOSS

New York University

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The Rebuilding of Blighted Areas.

A study of the neighborhood unit in replanning and plot assemblage. By Clarence Arthur Perry; architectural and planning studies under the direction of C. Earl Morrow. New York, Regional Plan Association of New York, 1933. 59 pp. \$2.00.

Anything from the pen of Mr. Perry deserves careful study. His name is already identified with the neighborhood unit idea, widely accepted by city planners.

The idea is, in briefest terms, that the district which furnishes the population for an elementary school is about the right size to develop common interests and a neighborly spirit if the lay-out is such as to encourage it, that traffic should be routed around rather than through it, that children should be able to go and come from school and playgrounds without crossing a traffic street, that shops should be on the periphery, and that by pooling and making the most of open spaces admirable living conditions and recreation facilities may be secured.

In this work Mr. Perry applies the neighborhood unit idea to the rebuilding of blighted areas through voluntary action on the part of owners. He makes the discussion concrete by attaching it to an actual area at Winfield, in the borough of Queens, New York, a section accessible, but not close-in, in the early stages of blight. To show the flexibility of the idea, five plans have been drawn for this 41-acre tract, two of which have been worked out in some detail on the basis of a fairly high-cost development, with rents at \$21 per room per month, and two for low-cost development under the State Board of Housing at \$10 per room per month.

The reader should bear in mind that this is not a study of slum clearance, nor is it offered as a substitute for slum clearance. It was written before the recent emergence of slum clearance by public authorities into the field of practical possibilities.

The question suggests itself, whether it would be wise to encourage, in a section not at present intensively developed, a type of building which, if used over the entire area of New York City, would provide housing for over 25 million people. Would not neighborhood units with five to six thousand inhabitants and fairly high buildings, leave more areas of blight behind them than they could cure? If the land costs too much for two-story houses, and yet is needed for no other purpose than low-rent housing, doesn't it follow that the value is an imaginary one, which needs deflation?

At all events, Mr. Perry will have rendered a public service if he sets owners of blighted areas to thinking along the lines of such broad parks and gardens and playgrounds as are found in his neighborhood unit plans.

EDITH ELMER WOOD

*

Tax Limits. By Mabel L. Walker. New York, General Welfare Tax League, 1933. 8 pp. mimeo. Twenty-five cents.

The December bulletin of the General Welfare Tax League is devoted to a brief description and discussion of tax limitation—its effectiveness and practical results. The outstanding feature of the study, however, is its presentation in summarized tabular form of the constitutional and statutory limitations in the various states as of November 1933.

Property Tax Limitation Laws. Statements by Twenty-four Authorities. Edited by Glen Leet and Robert M. Paige. Chicago, Public Administration Service, 1934. 92 pp. Seventy-five cents.

The rapid spread of rigorous tax-limit laws—both constitutional and statutory—has been a striking phenomenon in recent public finance. In several cases these laws have been initiative measures forced through the legislature by an aroused electorate. The appearance of this collection of short studies on the subject made by competent scholars and administrators is therefore exceedingly timely. The case for and against tax limitations is stated succinctly. An analysis of the growth and extent of such legislation and consideration of the motives behind the movement and the relationship of tax limits to home rule, municipal credit, and budgeting are important features. Of particular interest and value are the articles dealing with the operation of such laws in the eight states that have adopted the most stringent limits. The sentiment of the majority of the writers is reflected in the closing words of the article by Professor Simeon E. Leland: "The conclusion is inescapable that the tax limitation plan is an unintelligent and ineffective method of accomplishing desirable results. . . What a pity so much energy could not have been devoted to an intelligent effort to improve state and local fiscal systems!"

MABEL L. WALKER

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Local Finance and Procedure. By Loren B. Miller. Detroit, Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township and School District Government, 1933. 97 pp. Fifteen cents.

This valuable study sets forth in some detail the financial facts and practices of local governments of Michigan and makes concrete recommendations for their improvement. Like local governments in other states, administrative organization and financial procedure are thoroughly outmoded and constructive legislation with intelligent enforcement is a fundamental requirement. Against a background of facts and statistics, presented graphically to a marked extent, the author makes suggestions as to assessments, tax collection, budget procedure, accounting and reporting,

auditing, purchasing improvements, debt classification, debt procedure, debt limits and redemption, refunding, short term borrowing, special assessments, and other subjects—with considerable emphasis on state control.

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The Michigan Commission of Inquiry Into County, Township, and School District Government, for which Lent D. Upson is Director of Inquiry, has also issued recently two smaller booklets. The first, published December 1933, 27 pp., five cents, contains:

Population Trends, by George T. Ragsdale and Lent D. Upson, which shows the shifts in population resulting from the change from a dominantly rural to a dominantly urban state with the resulting burden of governmental areas in the sparsely populated sections; **Natural Community Areas**, by J. F. Thaden, which gives graphically the results of a study made to show to what extent existing civil boundaries coincide with natural boundaries and suggests the possibility of developing less artificial governmental divisions; and **Rural Land Zoning**, by P. A. Herbert, which discusses the desirability of mapping land economically suited to various purposes and limiting its use to those justified, with a withdrawal of governmental services from areas not capable of providing a living to their inhabitants. The second study, **School Organization in the Detroit Metropolitan Area**, by Don S. Miller, February, 1934, 18 pp., five cents, discusses the educational and financial problems involved in the proposal to consolidate the school districts of Wayne County into a single organic unit.

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Where the Sales Tax Falls. By Mabel L. Walker. New York, General Welfare Tax League, 1934, 12 pp. Twenty-five cents.

Everyone at all interested in tax problems is familiar with the theory that the sales tax is the antithesis of the fundamental "capacity to pay" principle. Dr. Walker's study gives the facts supporting this theory. Not only is the brief text interesting and informative, but there is a most effective graph showing the amount of tax per thousand dollars of income paid by persons of various in-

come groups under one, two, and three per cent sales taxes, including and exempting food.

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The Cost of Elections in the City of Buffalo and Erie County, N. Y. Buffalo, Buffalo Municipal Research Bureau, Inc., 1933. 36 pp. mimeo.

The search for possible economies in local governments leads certainly to the high cost of elections. The analysis of Buffalo and Erie County costs confirms the reputed extravagance in the conduct of the periodical voting. The Bureau shows clearly how expenditures could be reduced by local action and how much further by changes in state law. The movement for the revision of the election law in New York State has already been started. Such studies as this should stimulate favorable action. Meanwhile many municipalities might apply the Buffalo Bureau recommendations for themselves at considerable saving to the voters whom the elections function to serve.

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The Foundations of American Government (Revised). By Herman A. Spindt and Frederick Lynne Ryan. Boston, D. C. Heath and Company, 1934. 600 pp. \$1.80.

The authors have revised their textbook in civics which was first published in 1929. The important events since that date are carefully described, not merely with a view to bringing the volume up to date but in order to emphasize the significance of the past four years and to explain the developments in our institutions. Recent campaign issues, emergency legislation and changes in currency and banking, federal, state, and local budgets and taxation are all included to complete the previous material usual in civics texts.

The method of the earlier volume is maintained, with detailed explanations of statements made and the use of practical illustrations to support both facts and theories offered. Emphasis is placed on the importance of the study of civics to everyone who hopes to become an intelligent, effective citizen. Mr. Spindt is principal of the Kern County Union High School and Junior College at Bakersfield, California; Mr. Ryan, assistant professor of economics at the University of Oklahoma.



GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION NOTES

EDITED BY ROBERT M. PAIGE

Secretary-Treasurer, G. R. A.

Los Angeles County Bureau of Efficiency.—The Bureau has recently presented to the board of supervisors its annual report for the past fiscal year. A total of 180 separate studies and investigations were made and 164 completed reports submitted to the county board. The preparation of the budget was one of the major projects. Every department head was interviewed and the past expenditures and budget requests of each department carefully scrutinized. Expenditures for the fiscal year 1933-34 will be about 10 per cent less than those for 1932-33. Salaries of all county employees were re-examined and studies made to compare these salaries with those offered by private employers for similar work. An exhaustive study of automotive transportation provided for county employees was completed and the recommendation made that a centralized plan of control be adopted and all automotive equipment pooled. Another important study dealt with the possibility of using radio-equipped cars by the sheriff. The Bureau determined by actual observation and experiment that radio-equipped automobiles would vastly increase the effectiveness of the sheriff's patrol.

In a timely report the Bureau analyzed the probable results of separating the city of Los Angeles from Los Angeles County. Certain groups in the city were favoring this step at the time. The effect of separating city and county, the Bureau pointed out, would be a heavy increase in the cost of government for the "remnant" areas of the county. The agitation and interest aroused by this proposal, however, led to the appointment of a committee on governmental simplification. The Bureau was very active in the creation

of this committee and through the Bureau a coördinator was appointed to conduct its activities. The director of the Bureau is the chairman of the technical committee of the parent simplification committee.

The cost of research work of the Bureau during the past year was \$28,000. The Bureau estimates, however, that seven of its 180 separate studies show how an estimated tangible savings of over \$500,000 can be accomplished. Actual savings of several times the Bureau's cost were realized during the year as a result of the adoption of some of its recommendations. In addition to tangible savings, many of the Bureau's studies are concerned with the general efficiency of the various departments, and while the results of these studies may not in every case effect a cash saving, they tend to improve the county service in a way which is distinctly beneficial to citizens and taxpayers. For example, last year the Bureau advocated the expenditure of \$4,000 for police radio equipment, which it was estimated would increase the service efficiency and public protection of the sheriff's sub-stations by 50 to 75 per cent.

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Buffalo Municipal Research Bureau.—Recent developments in Buffalo have presented the opportunity for the Bureau to review the results of the school survey arranged and made by the Bureau in 1931. This survey was requested by the board of education. Experts of the staff of the United States Office of Education and the staff of the Bureau prepared a 500-page report which approved much of the work being done in the Buffalo schools and definitely criticized some practices, particularly in the business

affairs. The Bureau gave extensive publicity to the findings of the survey. During 1931 the board of education secured the services of a local firm of municipal accountants to install substantially all of the recommendations made in the survey report. The original survey was paid for by the Bureau. Subsequent investigations and installation cost a total of \$86,653 of public money. That this investment has been justified was proven when 1932-33 showed in comparison with 1929-30, a saving in the business operations of the Board of Education of \$254,036, and in the educational operations of \$806,983. A saving of over a million dollars was thus realized in a single year on an investment of \$90,000. The saving was even greater than this because in 1932-33 enrollment was up 7,820 in the high schools and 1,306 in the elementary schools, and normally this increase in enrollment would have caused an *increase* of about a million dollars in educational costs. The Research Bureau feels that, judged by Bureau standards, the Buffalo Board of Education during the past three years has done for the citizens of Buffalo a piece of work for which it deserves high commendation. The average man, at least, believes that the economies which it effected have not disturbed any of the essential and very few of the non-essential services of the schools.

The Bureau has just completed a financial study of the five municipally-owned and operated retail markets of Buffalo, New York. In two of them the stalls were found to be practically all rented; in the other three occupancy was 67, 38, and 10 per cent respectively. Each of the markets showed a loss in the last fiscal year, ranging from \$26,000 to \$46,000, by the Bureau's calculation.

The Bureau believes that municipal markets should be self-supporting and that the costs should include the same classes of expenses and charges a privately-owned market would have to bear, namely, operation and maintenance expense, taxes, interest on the investment, and depreciation of buildings and equipment. These costs are real and if not covered by revenues the loss is borne by the general taxpayer.

The Bureau report states that the retail public markets system, wherever used in con-

ditions similar to Buffalo's, is obsolete. Farm produce is no longer brought in from surrounding rural areas. About 64 per cent of all that consumed in Buffalo and surrounding territory is shipped in by rail. The report recommends closing the three least occupied markets and selling or renting the property. It recommends increasing the rentals of the other two by 50 per cent, or reducing expenses by an equal sum, which would make them self-supporting.

We are informed by the Bureau that an offer to rent two of the markets for a term of years has been tendered by private parties since the report was filed with the mayor and council.

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Bureau of Governmental Research of the Kansas City (Kansas) Chamber of Commerce.—The Bureau has just issued its annual report covering activities during 1933. The Bureau had an important part in bringing about a reduction in the expenditures of the city, county, and board of education of approximately \$500,000 for the year 1933-34. The expenditures of the board of education were decreased \$365,000 in 1933, under 1932, and it appears probable that expenditures for the fiscal year ending 1934 will be \$221,000 under those for 1933. The county reduced its operating expenses for the present year by 24 per cent. The Bureau collaborated with local officials in preparing the budgets which accomplished these economies and retrenchments.

Early in 1932 the Bureau prepared a detailed report on the welfare activities of the county. During 1933 many of the recommendations of this report were carried out, including the passage of a law establishing a central case index and a uniform accounting and reporting system. The Bureau also sponsored or assisted in the drafting of legislation to improve the county's budgetary procedure, change the fiscal year to the calendar year, provide for scientific assessments, provide a modern accounting system in the county, set up qualifications for the county auditor, and provide for an audit of the county records. With the exception of two bills, all the legislative measures submitted by the Bureau were either passed or incorporated in part in other bills which were submitted as the governor's legislative program.

The Bureau's annual report contains a great deal of valuable statistical data: assessed valuations, tax levies, analyses of bonded indebtedness for which property in Kansas City is liable, etc.

The director of the Bureau is Clifton Roberts. H. B. Kendrick is staff accountant.

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Boston Finance Commission.—The Commission presented its annual report to the Massachusetts legislature early in February. During the past year the Commission examined with great care the proposed city budget for 1933-34, and recommended economies and retrenchments which were considered by the state legislature when it reduced the permissible expenditures of the city for other than emergency purposes by approximately \$3,000,000. All land purchases and proposed land purchases of the city were carefully investigated and checked by the Commission's staff, and several unwise purchases were averted. The critical analysis which the Commission made of the mayor's public works proposals to the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works contributed to the rejection of certain of these projects by state and federal authorities. Detailed proposals for revising the city's charter were drafted and submitted to the special legislative commission considering charter revision and to the legislature.

During the year the Commission has continued its policy of making frequent inspection of the character of the paving work being done by the city and an improvement in practically all branches of this work was noted. Surveys were made of the county jail and of the Long Island hospital and almshouse, and suggestions made for the correction of certain purchasing, personnel, and administrative practices. Members of the Commission's staff followed in complete detail the construction of a new high school in an effort to determine whether the excessive number of changes in plans which customarily take place during the construction period could be reduced. The Commission's vigilance is believed to have resulted in an improvement in the work of the staff of the school buildings department and as a result the high school constructed last year more nearly approaches the specified product than ever has been the case in the past.

The scrutiny of the purchasing department has been continued as a regular function. Although further centralization of purchasing is deemed desirable, the purchasing methods of the city have improved markedly since the Commission's thorough survey three years ago.

During the coming year the effort to reorganize the public welfare department will be continued. The Commission will also work for an improvement in the methods and organization employed in the assessing department and will complete a survey of the city's hospitals.

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Los Angeles Bureau of Municipal Research.—The consolidation of all of the separate tax-levying governments within Los Angeles County with a single legislative body of perhaps 45 members, elected at large by proportional representation, a single appointive executive or manager, one court system, one finance department, one public service department, one social service department, one department of education, and one police force is the far-reaching recommendation contained in the recently published report of the Bureau to the Citizens Committee for City and County Unification. This report presents data fundamental alike to the consideration of governmental reorganization and to the planning of the future economic development within the county. Population trends, industrial development and present occupational status of the gainfully employed are analyzed and conclusions drawn from these facts. Sweeping changes are recommended in the tax structure. The abolition of the taxation of land, "except to prevent unsocial hoarding or profiteering," the institution of a comprehensive system of service charges and fees, and increased state and federal support for education are perhaps the most important of these suggested changes.

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Tennessee Taxpayers Association.—Under the direction of the Tennessee Valley Authority research workers in five states are collaborating in the collection of basic data in the fields of economics, education, government, and sociology in their respective states. The Association has cooperated in this comprehensive research program and the services of its staff were made available for a con-

siderable amount of time during the last of 1933 and the first of this year. CWA funds were used for this research and the Association's staff supervised the work of CWA employees.

The second annual report of the fiscal affairs of the state government has been recently published by the Association. This report reveals an improved financial condition on June 30, 1933, over that on the corresponding date in 1932, a budget balanced without new taxes, and substantial upturns in the yields of some of the principal taxes due to better enforcement.

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Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance.—The semi-monthly publication of *The Wisconsin Taxpayer* is now in its second year. A wealth of information and valuable data with reference to Wisconsin's state and local government have been published in this small newspaper as well as many interesting governmental facts and developments in other states. The February fifteenth issue features an analysis of the antiquated township-supervisor county board system which is used in Wisconsin and in only three other states (Illinois, Michigan, and New York). Counties in Wisconsin may adopt by referendum the commission or small county board form of organization and the specific steps which must be taken to call this election and the important features of the commission form of county government under Wisconsin laws are outlined in detail.

Paul N. Reynolds, formerly the director of research of the Taxpayers Alliance, is now serving also as the executive director of the organization.

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Governmental Research Reports Received Since February 15, 1934.—

Report of the Governor's Committee on the Costs of Public Education in the State of New York. Published by the Committee, Albany, November 1933. Apply to Governor Herbert Lehman.

Municipal Markets of Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Municipal Research Bureau, February. Price \$1.

Use of Private Cars by City Employees on

City Business: Rates Paid. American Municipal Association, Chicago, February. Report No. 81. Price 25 cents.

A State-Shared Federal Sales Tax. Research Report Prepared for Interstate Commission on Conflicting Taxation. Clarence Heer, American Legislators' Association, Chicago, March 8. Price 50 cents.

Unified Government and Tax Reform for Los Angeles County. Los Angeles Bureau of Municipal Research, February. Price \$5.

County Boards in 48 States. Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, Madison, February 15. 4 pages.

Local Government Solvency through Tax Relief and Economy; Fourth Report of the New York State Commission for the Revision of the Tax Laws. Research conducted by the Institute of Public Administration. Published by the Commission, Albany, February 15. Legislative Document No. 56.

An Analysis of the Optional County Government Reorganization Proposals Now Before the Legislature. Schenectady Bureau of Municipal Research Bulletin, February 12.

School Organization in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. Don S. Miller, Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township, and School District Government. Apply to Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Detroit, February. Price 5 cents.

Local Finance and Procedure. Loren B. Miller, Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township, and School District Government. Apply to Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Detroit, September 1933. Price 15 cents.

Boston City Finances and the Effect of Restoring Salary Schedules. Boston Municipal Research Bureau, February 6.

Population Trends. George T. Ragsdale and Lent D. Upson; including also *Natural Community Areas*, by J. F. Thaden; and *Rural Land Zoning*, by P. A. Herbert. Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township and School District Government. Apply to Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Detroit, December 1933.

Report Covering the Second Annual Survey of the Government of the State of Tennessee for 1933. Tennessee Taxpayers' Association, Nashville, 1933. Price \$5.

Taxation and Government

Many taxing units must be merged if constructive economy is to rule

EDITED BY WADE S. SMITH

Sumners Bill Reported Out of Senate Committee.—On March fifth the Senate Judiciary Committee voted favorably, 8 to 5, on the Sumners Bill (H.R. 5950). This is the bill which would permit cities in financial difficulties or in default on their debts to petition the federal courts for an adjustment with creditors, provided thirty per cent of the creditors consented to the action. The committee vote overturned a 4 to 1 adverse decision by a sub-committee and brings the measure before the Senate. The bill was passed by the House last spring.

Those voting for a favorable report were: Ashurst, Stephens, Dill, Neely, Logan, Long, Democrats; Borah and Austin, Republicans. Those voting in opposition were King, Van Nuys, McCarran, Democrats; Hastings and Herbert, Republicans.

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Overlapping Taxing Authorities.—Widespread movements looking toward county consolidation and the reorganization of local units emphasize the need for the simplification of governmental structure and the redistribution of functions if governmental costs are to be held within even the most optimistic limits. Through the country at large there are, according to a recent report of the Census Bureau, some 194,630 units having tax levying and debt incurring power, including the 48 states, 3062 counties, 16,660 cities, towns, villages, and boroughs, 128,661 school districts, 19,769 townships, and 26,430 other civil divisions. The overlapping functions of this vast array of governmental units represents a waste of money and a duplication of effort which very conceivably is roughly equal to the extra margin of governmental costs

now causing such a discordant uproar from the nation's taxpayers.

Other sources of information show that in New York State there are 62 counties, 60 cities, 529 incorporated villages, and 932 towns. The villages and towns overlap, and the whole structure is further complicated by the superimposition of some 9,504 school districts and 2,467 special districts of one kind or another—a total of 13,554 units providing local government in some form.

In Wisconsin taxes are levied by 9,554 separate and distinct units. There are 145 cities, 1,280 towns, 359 villages, 7,251 common school districts, 332 high school districts, 74 drainage districts, 37 farm drainage boards, 3 metropolitan sewerage districts, and 71 counties, plus, of course, the state and federal government. The Wisconsin Taxpayers' Alliance comments: "Administration cannot be of the highest type since many of the units are so small they are unable to afford the best talent. The best interests of the community are sacrificed through needless waste."

Within Cuyahoga County, in which is located Cleveland, Ohio, there are no less than 103 taxing units, with overlapping and conflicting jurisdictions, each competent to prepare its own budget for submission to the county budget commission. Economy and efficiency are obviously out of the question when government is dependent upon such a myriad-headed structure. In the metropolitan area of New Jersey, comprising Hudson, Essex, Union, Bergen, and Passaic Counties, there are 140 municipalities, plus 136 school districts—in an area twenty miles wide and thirty-five miles long. In the Chicago metropolitan area Cook County includes some 419 distinct and independent local governments.

Exclusive of the cities and villages, the state of Michigan has 6,878 school districts, 1,269 townships, and the 83 counties. Colorado recently planned to reduce its 63 counties to 43, in order to achieve a minimum valuation for tax purposes of \$6,000,000 for each county.

Conditions such as these are not peculiar to the states and areas mentioned. They can be duplicated in virtually every section of the country. Until recently the average taxpayer has been aware of them principally through the multiplicity of tax bills and assessments he has received once a year, a multiplicity accepted as a nuisance but given no serious consideration as a phenomenon of government worth investigating. If the present crisis in local government will lead to a wider application of efforts to simplify and reconstruct the units existing for the service of the localities, it will have served at least one useful purpose.

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Eleven Point Program for California Tax Reduction.—At the eighth annual meeting of the California Taxpayers' Association held in Los Angeles March 2, a program for 1934 looking toward the elimination of overlapping and obsolete units of local government was adopted as the best means of reducing taxes and governmental costs. The points submitted were as follows:

"1. The simplification of governmental organization—cost of government can be reduced if we can have voluntary coöperation and coördination of activities and joint operation of services by the many overlapping units of government.

"2. Reduction of the number of governmental units and taxing authorities.

"3. Elimination of overlapping between departments and bureaus within government.

"4. The adoption of the principle of pay-as-you-go in financing capital outlays wherever practical.

"5. Extension of the principle of centralized purchasing of supplies and materials.

"6. Improvement in personnel administration.

"7. Adoption of the uniform accounting system for every phase of governmental activity.

"8. Elimination of special services and functions of government that are not of general benefit.

"9. Pooling of all mechanical equipment.

"10. Maintenance at all costs of the expenditure limitation set up in the Riley-Steward plan, which will expire with the opening of the legislature in 1935.

"11. Enactment of a constitutional amendment establishing a property holding qualification for voting on bond issues."

A comprehensive program, this, and one to which other taxpayers' groups might look for confirmation of the growing idea that tax reduction isn't as simple as it may have seemed originally to a few budget slashing enthusiasts.

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Municipal Consultant Service Gives Preliminary Report on Nassau County, N. Y., Survey.—Declaring that there is nothing wrong with the finances of Nassau County, except a peculiar legal situation already in process of correction, a recent report issued by the Municipal Consultant Service of the National Municipal League stresses the potential resources of the county and outlines some of the measures under way to remedy its present situation.

The total debt of the county and all its subordinate units is only \$103,000,000, about \$341 per capita, and 10.54 per cent of the total assessed valuation—figures comparing favorably with those of other similarly situated counties. The peculiar legal situation arises from the fact that the town tax receivers pay all they take in over to those units until they are paid in full, thus leaving the county holding the bag. When, as this year, the total levy is approximately \$20,000,000, of which the county's share is \$7,000,000, even if 80 per cent of the taxes are collected the county gets only about 40 per cent of its portion. Legislation is pending to make the distribution pro rata, so that all the units share on the same terms.

Further legislation has been introduced providing for the establishment of a \$2,500,000 cash basis fund, \$500,000 to be set aside annually until this amount has been accumulated, which will be used to provide county funds until taxes are collected. This revolving fund will eliminate the necessity of periodic borrowing in anticipation of taxes, and, coupled with a new quarterly system of receiving taxes, will insure sufficient funds to meet cash needs at all times. Reforms in the

procedure of selling tax liens have also been instituted to shorten the redemption period to two years and make possible the clearing up of delinquencies in a time short enough to make the sale of liens attractive and further eliminate the need of borrowing in anticipation of taxes.

Tax collections under the quarterly system are already within 3.1 per cent of those during the same period in 1933, a condition attributed in part to increased confidence in the local government and in part to the effects of national recovery.

Dr. Thomas H. Reed, director of the Municipal Consultant Service, is at present working on a survey of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, financial situation, and will begin shortly similar work at Winter Park, Florida.

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Detroit Taxes Rolling In.—On the basis of tax collections so far in 1934, the Detroit treasurer is receiving taxes at the rate of about \$1,000,000 per month, as compared with less than \$300,000 monthly last year. Daily receipts have been running from two and a half to five times those of comparable days in 1933. The money is for all kinds of taxes—real, personal, special assessments often years old, and for delinquent taxes.

Deputy City Treasurer Albert E. Cobo said recently that, "Many people with delinquent taxes are taking advantage of the chance to save 5 per cent of the city bid by paying in full, as our 'tax relief' charter amendment permits. On a delinquent tax of \$100, which is \$110 at the city bid, they are getting the bill paid for about \$106.50. Not many taxpayers are coming in under the seven-year plan yet. They have until April 10, however, to arrange to pay their delinquent taxes in installments over seven years by making the first payment of 5 per cent."

Improved collections have resulted in larger funds available for pay-rolls and other bills due.

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Government Sells First Block of Municipal Securities.—On March 4 the Public Works Administration sold at Washington four blocks of municipal bonds of a total par value of \$737,000, at a total price of \$757,050. Bids were rejected on a fifth block of \$100,000 for which a premium price was not offered.

These bonds were purchased by the PWA to aid local units in financing their projects of public works construction. The administration has contracted to buy upwards of half a billion dollars' worth of such securities, and is authorized to feed them back into the general market, the proceeds of their sale to revert to the treasury. Three of the blocks sold March 4 are 4 per cent bonds, the fourth a 4½ per cent issue. In connection with the sale the question naturally arises as to just what proportion of the securities held by the PWA will prove marketable at premium prices, in view of the fact that the government was forced in the first place to assume the financing of the work projects because of the reluctance of private investors to put money into the particular issues involved.

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The so-called Alger plan for mortgage aid in New York State, recently submitted to Governor Lehman, provides, among other things, for the advance of loans to certificate holders for the purpose of paying taxes, thus giving opportunity to mortgage and municipality at once.

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A 16 per cent drop in appropriations by Massachusetts cities and towns between 1932 and 1933 was announced by the Massachusetts commissioners of corporations and taxation, according to the New England Council. Taxpayers' vigilance and aroused citizen interest are held chiefly responsible.

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"No taxes should be based on anything but income," said the head of a New York realty company recently in presenting a case for the reduction of realty taxes. An equitable tax, apparently, is one paid by the other fellow; and realty groups may be expected to give increasing support to the income tax—if and when they give up the sales tax fixation.

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The state of New Hampshire, whose policies in sustaining municipal credit we mentioned recently, sold on February 16 nearly two and a half million dollars' worth of bonds at a new high price level for the municipal bond market. The bonds are secured by unlimited taxes leviable against all taxable property in the state—a warning to those who would restrict ad valorem

property taxation that such "limitation" may be secured at the doubtful advantage of higher interest charges on whatever debt must be floated.

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A bill providing that current municipal expenditures be limited to 75 per cent of the 1930 budget and that hereafter local government expenditures be on a per capita basis, was introduced late in February in the New Jersey state legislature. Details were not released pending possible changes in committee.

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The mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, has addressed a plea to the county's delegation to the state legislature asking that the state relinquish to the municipalities a greater share of some state taxes, and abandon others to the cities entirely. He points out that the state collects over forty dollars from Jackson taxpayers for each dollar the state contributes to the city. Local taxpayers pay approximately 50 per cent more to the state than it costs to operate the city government.

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Atlantic City recently adopted its 1934 budget of \$3,856,078, as compared with \$4,861,828 for 1933. The tax levy has been reduced about one third. The state auditor has protested that the reduction was made by omitting from the budget items, among other things, required by law and totaling more than \$1,000,000. This is hardly constructive economy.

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Analysis of delinquent taxes in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, "has unearthed scores of delinquent properties" whose owners continue collecting rent, or who have bought in the properties at foreclosure sales themselves while continuing to collect rents, according to an article in the February *Nebraska Municipal Review*. Reformed procedure in selling tax certificates is proposed to help remedy the situation.

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A taxpayer of Austin, Texas, has brought suit against a state representative who is delinquent in his state property taxes, to prevent the payment of the representative's salary. The action is taken under a statute preventing debtors to the state from receiving payment until the debt is paid. The representative, who is said to owe some \$1,200 in

taxes and penalties, was supporting a proposed tax moratorium measure in the state legislature.

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Thirty-two townships in St. Louis County, Minnesota, may be dissolved under state law by the board of county commissioners, which has authority to dissolve towns having a tax delinquency in excess of 70 per cent or a valuation of less than \$50,000 with a 60 per cent delinquency. A survey of the townships in the county is to be made.

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A survey of typical tax delinquent properties in Toledo, Ohio, disclosed that 11 per cent of the parcels delinquent owe slightly over 55 per cent of the total arrears. These parcels, with a minimum tax bill of \$1000, aggregate \$281,105 out of some \$508,887 studied. Persons with tax bills under \$100 own 18.9 per cent of the parcels delinquent, but owe only about 2½ per cent of the arrears. The \$500-\$1000 tax bill group is responsible for 14 per cent of the parcels and 18 per cent of the arrears. Further evidence that, in general, it is the big fellow who isn't paying his taxes.

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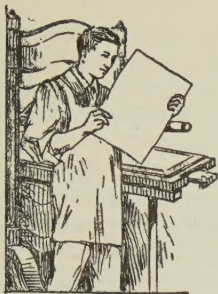
The town of Walkerville, Ontario, is seeking legislation, similar to the Sumners Bill, to permit it to reach an agreement with its bondholders to refinance the bonded indebtedness of the municipality. It seeks an arrangement such that if 60 per cent of the holders agree to a plan, the other 40 per cent will be bound by it also.

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As a result of a recent decision of the West Virginia Supreme Court some \$25,000,000 in "frozen" taxes can now be released to the municipalities. Following imposition of a tax limit, it will be remembered, court decisions held that debt requirements must be met before operating funds could be diverted, thus cutting off operating funds for dozens of cities and making a collapse of local government inevitable.

*

Louisville, Ky., has used a lawyer from the city attorney's office as a special tax collector for the past two years. About \$170,000 has been collected, the only additional expense to the city being for a stenographer for the tax attorney.



NOTES AND EVENTS

H. M. OLMSTED

County Home Rule Developments in Ohio.—Two of the largest Ohio counties have recently provided for the submission of the question of electing charter commissions under the county home rule amendment adopted last fall. These counties are Cuyahoga and Lucas, containing the cities of Cleveland and Toledo, respectively. In both cases the vote will be taken at the general election next November. At the same time members will be elected to make up the charter commissions if the proposition is approved by the voters. The election of a charter commission is also being actively urged in Summit County (Akron) and is under consideration in at least three other urban counties. Under the home rule amendment charters drafted by commissions elected this year will be acted upon by the voters in the fall of 1935.

A commission on county government has been appointed by Governor White to formulate optional plans of county government for submission to the legislature and to report on problems of county reorganization. Charles P. Taft, 2nd, of Cincinnati has been made chairman of this commission and R. C. Atkinson, of the Ohio Institute, secretary. The commission expects to carry through an intensive study of county reorganization as a basis for legislation and for the guidance of local charter commissions.

R. C. ATKINSON

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Municipal Financial Officials' School Held in Albany.—The New York State Conference of Mayors is resuming operation of its full schedule of training schools after a suspension of one year because of economic conditions. A training school for financial

officials of the cities and villages of the state was held in Albany on February 19-21, under the direction of the mayors' conference and bureau of municipal accounts of the state department of audit and control. It was attended by fifty officials from thirty-one municipalities. This was greater than the attendance at the 1932 school and was a cause of distinct encouragement to the conference.

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New York University Group Submits Charter Revision Plan.—Proposals for a revised charter for the city of New York, with suggestions for financial relief, were submitted in February to Mayor F. H. LaGuardia by a committee from the division of research in public administration, New York University, headed by Dean Rufus D. Smith. The other members were Morley Ayeaerst, Chas. P. Barry, Richard A. Girard, Warner Moss, Roy V. Peel, A. N. Sack, Thorndike Saville, W. A. Sayre, T. H. Skinner, Emanuel Stein, P. H. Studenski, R. J. Swenson, and C. W. Tooke, with John Bauer as consultant on public utilities. This division was organized by Russell Forbes, former secretary of the National Municipal League, when a professor of government at the university.

The plan includes the following points:

- A council of one chamber elected by proportional representation
- Preferential voting for mayor
- Greater concentration of responsibility
- Consolidation of most of the county government agencies
- Elimination of administrative departments from borough governments
- Greater limitations on the city's borrowing powers
- Ways of increasing the city's revenues
- A new system of personnel administration
- Centralization of all public works

Reorganization of the city courts
 An overhauling of the educational system
 Teacher representation on the Board of Education
 A strong bureau of city planning
 Permanent registration of voters.

With regard to public utilities it is recommended that municipal ownership and operation be permitted and that regulation of privately owned utilities, which are chiefly confined to the municipal limits and involve conditions peculiar to the city, be exercised locally. Administrative features of such control would be in a special bureau, while the council would have power to determine policies, standards, and methods of control, subject to judicial appeal.

A larger share of state-collected taxes to go to the city is recommended for permanent financial relief, and also highway privilege taxes for encroachments etc., business and occupational license taxes, and an amusement tax if not levied by the state or federal government. Emergency taxes suggested include a tax on vehicles operated on public highways for private profit without a franchise, and excise taxes on rents and utility bills in excess of certain amounts.

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Supreme Court Stresses Power of Governmental Regulation, Citing Billboards, Building Codes, and Zoning.—The opinion of the United States Supreme Court, written by Justice Roberts, in the famous New York Milk Law case (*Nebbia vs New York*, decided March 5, 1934, 291 U. S. p. . . .), upholding the power of the state to fix milk prices through a milk control board, cites by way of illustration a number of businesses subjected to regulation and restriction under the police power, billboards being the first to be mentioned, in the following excerpt:

"The state may control the use of property in various ways; may prohibit advertising billboards except of a prescribed size and location, or their use for certain kinds of advertising; may in certain circumstances authorize encroachments by party walls in cities; may fix the height of buildings, the character of materials, and methods of construction, the adjoining area which must be left open, and may exclude from residential sections offensive trades, industries and structures likely injuriously to affect the public health or safety; or may establish zones

within which certain types of buildings or businesses are permitted and others excluded."

The claim of the outdoor advertising men that they are beyond control by the police power of the states because of the clauses in the United States constitution forbidding the states to deny "equal protection of the laws" or "due process of law," and because they are in private business, has been judicially dead for some time under previous decisions. Now the Supreme Court of the United States, by its dictum quoted above, drives another cheerful nail into the coffin.

The decision in the milk control case has, of course, far wider implications, as illustrated by the following from Justice Roberts' opinion:

"Under our form of government the use of property and the making of contracts are normally matters of private and not of public concern. The general rule is that both shall be free of governmental interference. But neither property rights nor contract rights are absolute; for government cannot exist if the citizen may at will use his property to the detriment of his fellows, or exercise his freedom of contract to work them harm. Equally fundamental with the private right is that of the public to regulate it in the common interest. . . ."

ALBERT S. BARD

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State Tax Officials Organize Nationally.—At a two-day conference in Indianapolis, February 19-20, attended by tax officials of nineteen states, and called primarily to discuss the problems of levying and collecting sales and income taxes, a permanent organization was effected known as the National Association of State Tax Administrators.

Fred E. Stewart, member of the California Board of Equalization, was elected president; Harry McMullan, North Carolina Director of Assessments and Collections, vice-president; Clarence A. Jackson, Indiana Income Tax Director, secretary-treasurer; and Mrs. Ruth Thorne, his secretary, executive secretary.

The association is expected to assemble information pertaining to state tax laws and administrative methods, to work for the adoption of state laws "that will prove most effective in point of equality of tax burden, revenue produced, and ease and uniformity of

administration," to study and propose federal legislation that will tend to eliminate difficulties of enforcing state tax laws, and to promote equality and uniformity of taxation.

A resolution was adopted to petition Congress and the President for legislation permitting states to levy a tax on incoming interstate commerce shipments.

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New York State Tax Revision Commission Reports.—On February 8 the fourth annual report of the State Tax Revision Commission was submitted to the New York legislature. This commission, headed by Senator Seabury C. Mastick, Republican, of Westchester County, made several important recommendations.

Of special interest because of the conservative character of the commission and its leadership was its plea that authority be clearly granted to municipalities to supply electric light and power to their citizens. Detailed provisions for the exercise of this right are set forth based upon an engineering survey made for the commission. The latter states its belief that capably managed municipally-owned systems are able to provide service at prices considerably below those charged at present by most private companies. Control of municipal utilities by semi-autonomous boards is recommended, with some supervision by a special bureau of the state public service commission. The utilities should be self-sustaining, with option on the part of the municipality as to whether they should pay taxes and/or a fair return on value. This recommendation as to the right of municipal utility ownership is in line with Governor Lehman's program.

The commission also called for a two per cent retail sales tax as an emergency measure, to yield \$110,000,000 for relief of municipalities, despite the Governor's stand that the existing one per cent tax be abolished as an impediment to recovery.

Other suggestions were for a state liquor authority to handle all wholesale liquor business and yield \$60,000,000, also for the benefit of the municipalities, reorganization of local government, and a further study of the basis for apportioning state aid for education.

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State Planning Board in Minnesota.—A state planning board of seventeen members has recently been organized in Minnesota.

Ex-officio members are from the state departments of conservation, highways, board of control, board of health, railroad and warehouse commission, and rural credits. The state PWA advisory board is represented by two members; various outstanding citizens, appointed by Governor Olsen, constitute the remainder. The board is largely due to efforts of George E. Herrold, city planning engineer of St. Paul, and Professor Morris B. Lambie of the University of Minnesota, state CWA coördinator.

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University of Texas Has Municipal Research Bureau.—President H. Y. Benedict of the University of Texas has announced the establishment of a Bureau of Municipal Research to be operated in connection with the department of government of the university. Dr. Roscoe C. Martin, associate professor of government, has been named director of the bureau.

The purposes of the bureau as they are outlined by Dr. Martin are three-fold in nature. First, it will attempt to provide consultant services for the cities of the state. Secondly, it will undertake to make studies of particular problems suggested by city officials. Thirdly, it will engage in research projects on its own initiative. It will be equipped with a staff which will enable it to perform these services in a reasonably adequate fashion.

The establishment of the bureau of municipal research at this particular time constitutes a recognition by university authorities of the need for facts which confronts the cities more desperately now than ever before. The bureau is stated to be the only establishment for disinterested municipal research in Texas.

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Charter Giving Administrative Concentration Defeated in Santa Clara County.—The proposed charter for Santa Clara County was defeated on February 20 by a vote of 19,637 to 14,598. The defeat came primarily in the county seat, San Jose, where the city employees and school teachers combined with the county employees to maintain the status quo. The chief opposition to the charter seemed to lie in the heavy concentration of authority of fiscal affairs under the executive-controller, of public works under the county engineer, and of health and welfare work

under a single board. The teachers opposed the charter because the county superintendent of schools was removed from the elective list and made appointive by the board of education.

An interesting feature of the election was that the fifth district, in which Stanford University and Palo Alto are located, voted 5,514 to 4,234 in favor of the charter, especially the university, which went 224 to 17 in its favor.

The charter has received considerable favorable comment and I think with certain modifications and changes will probably come up for consideration and adoption in some of the other counties which are thinking about this matter.

EDWIN A. COTTRELL

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A County Purchasing Report.—The county commissioners of Lucas County, Ohio, with headquarters at Toledo, early in the current year received the annual report on purchasing of their director of finance and purchasing, H. T. Shenefield. Total purchases of \$359,290 were reported, of which \$273,953 was from the general fund and the remainder from special funds. More purchasing in quantity was stated to have occurred, and when it became evident that prices were rising, stocks were increased in anticipation of the rise, notably in the case of the county home and hospital, for which from six to nine months' supply of staple foods, drugs, and cotton goods for surgical purposes was purchased, with a claimed saving of over 26 per cent.

The commodity price index of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics was closely watched, a corresponding index for county purchases was computed, and for the last eight months of the year county purchases were indicated as at a lower index than the bureau's.

The following recommendations were made:

1. That a joint committee on coördinating purchases be created between the city, county, board of education, and university, for the purchasing of all large purchases where by combined quantity large savings can be made for each. This has already been done in Cincinnati.

2. That there be established by joint agreement between city, county, board of education, and university a joint testing laboratory at the university. Such arrangement would be economical for the three governmental units and would be a valuable piece of work for the university.

3. That the charter commission to be elected at the August primaries under the county home rule amendment consider the advisability of the entire centralization of all county purchasing.

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Memphis City Government Contemplates Research Bureau.—Mayor Watkins Overton of Memphis, Tenn., has announced that the city government is considering the establishment of a municipal research bureau, to gather information for assistance to officials in preparing budgets, instituting economies, dealing with tax delinquencies, drafting legislation, etc. Comparison of costs and systems in Memphis with those in other cities would be one of its principal functions.

It is expected that the bureau would have its headquarters in the city-county building and would include to some extent the function of a municipal reference library. Unemployed research and library workers might be drawn upon at present in getting the project under way.

Memphis has seen much activity in civic education of a practical, informal sort, the city government taking pains to make municipal affairs more fully understood by the citizens. At present a fifteen-minute radio talk is given every Sunday night over WNBR by city employees and officials, explaining the work of the various departments and other aspects of municipal government; and short talks are also given from time to time over station WMC. When tax delinquencies mounted some time ago special efforts were made to bring home to the taxpayers the benefits received from taxes and notable improvement in collections resulted. The projected research bureau is another example of intelligent effort to make the municipal government efficient, responsive, and understood. Much of the development along these lines has been due to Mayor Overton and to Ralph Picard, administrative assistant to the city commission.